

# How to Give a Bed Bath

**Important:** This handout is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for official clinical training. Consult with your physician about any physical limitations you may have before performing patient care. If you have any questions, please contact us by calling 336.889.8446.

**Step 1:** Explain the procedure to the patient.

**Step 2:** Raise the patient's bed to a comfortable working height to avoid back strain.

**Step 3:** Fill the bath basin 2/3 full of warm water and bring to the patient's bedside. The water temperature should be comfortable when tested with your elbow or back of the wrist.

**Step 4:** If the bed will be changed, remove the top linen. If not, fanfold it to the bottom of the bed.

**Step 5:** Position the patient on their back, if possible.

**Step 6:** Remove the patient's clothing and cover with a blanket to provide warmth and privacy.

**Step 7:** Place a towel under the chin. To wash the patient's face, begin with the eyes, working from the inner eye to the outer eye without soap. Use a separate section of washcloth for each eye.

**Step 8:** Wash the rest of the face, ears and neck using firm, gentle strokes. Dry the area carefully taking special care in skin folds and creases.

**Step 9:** Turn down the bath blanket and drape the patient's chest, abdomen and groin with a towel.

**Step 10:** Apply soap to the cloth and wash, rinse and dry the patient's chest, underarms, abdomen and groin. Apply deodorant.

**Step 11:** Place a towel beneath the patient's arm and bathe the arm moving from shoulder to hand. Wash, rinse and dry the arm. Then do the same for the other arm.

**Step 12:** Cover the patient's upper body and uncover the patient's legs. Place a towel under the leg while you wash and rinse from the thigh to the toes, cleaning carefully between the toes. Gently dry the leg and be sure to also dry between the toes. Repeat this process on the other leg.

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**Step 13:** Bathe the genital area thoroughly but gently, using a different section of the washcloth for each downward stroke. Bathe from front to back, avoiding the anal area. Rinse thoroughly and pat dry.

**Step 14:** Cover the patient's legs with a blanket.

**Step 15:** Change the water in the bath basin and get a clean washcloth.

**Step 16:** With the side rail up on the farthest side from you, roll the patient to that side and have the patient hold the rail. Bathe, rinse and dry the patient's back and buttocks. Massage the patient's back with lotion, if desired.

**Step 17:** Bathe the anal area from front to back. Rinse and dry well.

**Step 18:** If you are doing a complete bed change, begin arranging your linens now. Please refer to the **Basic Care Guides** video *Making and Changing an Occupied Bed* for further instructions.

**Step 19:** If you are doing a complete bed change, roll the patient to the other side, pull the soiled linens out, and straighten the clean linens under the patient. Please refer to the **Basic Care Guides** video *Making and Changing an Occupied Bed* for further instructions.

**Step 20:** Return the patient to their back and dress in a clean gown.

**Step 21:** Make the bed.