

Martin County 4-H



# PERSONAL HYGIENE

## A GUIDE TO LOOKING GOOD AND FEELING GREAT.



**4-H / Youth Development Programs**

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EXTENSION  
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## WHAT IS PERSONAL HYGIENE?

Personal Hygiene is a routine of personal care that keeps your whole body clean, fresh and healthy.

One of the most effective ways we have to protect ourselves and others from illness is good personal hygiene. This means washing your hands, especially, but also your body. It means being careful not to cough or sneeze on others, cleaning things that you touch if you are unwell, putting

items such as tissues (that may have germs) into a bin, and using protection (like gloves) when you might be at risk of catching an infection.

Personal hygiene, such as bathing, is very much dependent on the culture in which you live. In our culture, it is expected that you will wash your body at least every day and use deodorants to stop body smells. Other cultures have different expectations.

## TAKING CARE OF YOUR TEETH

Good dental hygiene includes regular brushing and flossing. Bad breath can be caused by diseases of the teeth, gums and mouth, such as infections. Most people have bad breath first thing in the morning because saliva is not made while you're asleep.

When you get your picture taken, everyone says, "Say cheese! Smile!" So you do - you open your mouth and show your teeth. When you see the picture, you see a happy person looking back at you. The healthier those teeth are, the happier you look. Why is that?

It's because your teeth are important in many ways. If you take care of them, they'll help take care of you.

Strong, healthy teeth help you chew the right foods to help you grow. They help you speak clearly. And yes, they help you look your best.

### Brush At Least Twice A Day.

1. Press bristle tips against the gum line at an angle.
2. Gently scrub the inside and outside surfaces of teeth, using short, back-and-forth strokes. Scrub the inside of front teeth with the tip of the toothbrush.
3. Scrub all chewing surfaces.
4. Brush your tongue and rinse your mouth.
5. Rinse your toothbrush.

## TIPS FOR GOOD HYGIENE.

### Prevent Body Odor

Body smells are caused by a number of factors working in combination, including:

- Chemicals in sweat.
- Wastes excreted through the skin.
- The actions of bacteria that live on the skin and feed on dead skin cells and sweat.
- Unwashed clothes, such as underwear and socks.

Body odor can be prevented by washing under arms and other hard to reach places thoroughly. After bathing or showering use a deodorant to mask odors or an antiperspirant to sweat less. Also remember to wear clean clothes such as underwear and socks.

### Use Clean Linens and Underwear

- Rinse face clothes thoroughly after use.
- Change towels and bedding often. Do not share towels.
- Change underwear daily.

## WASHING YOUR HANDS.

Even if your hands look clean, they probably carry germs. If you wash your hands really well with warm soapy water, you can get rid of germs. Some germs can make you sick. Colds and flu can spread from one person to another in your family through unwashed hands. It is also easy to contaminate food with germs from dirty hands.

### Always Wash Hands

#### **Before:**

- Handling Food
- Eating a meal or snack

#### **After:**

- Handling food
- Using the bathroom
- Handling an animal
- Coughing or sneezing

- Combing hair
- Blowing your nose
- Changing a diaper
- Handling garbage

### Hand Washing Tips

1. Use soap and warm running water.
2. Rub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds.
3. Wash all surfaces including back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
4. Rinse well.
5. Dry hands well with paper towel.
6. Turn off the faucet with paper towel you used to dry your hands.

## KEEP YOUR ENTIRE BODY CLEAN.

### Take Baths or Showers Every Day.

Be sure to:

- Wash all parts of your body.
- Rinse Well.
- Dry well, especially in tight places, such as between your toes.

### Wash Your Face Every Day.

Use a mild soap and warm water. Hot water, harsh soap and vigorous scrubbing can dry out or irritate your skin.

### Caring For Your Feet.

Wash your feet every day while showering or bathing. Be sure to dry thoroughly,

especially between toes. Do not forget to change socks daily.

### Wash Your Hair Regularly.

Hair cannot be washed too often! Our ancestors rarely washed their hair, however it is common practice for us to wash our hair every day, even several times a day if needed. Today's shampoos do not damage hair. Their conditioning agents protect the cuticle against harm from brushing and combing. How often you should shampoo could depend on your hair type, how active you are, the weather or other factors.

## SPECIAL CARE AREAS (EARS AND NAILS).

### Ears

As body parts go, your ears don't ask for much. All your ears need is to be washed regularly, so wash them with soap and water while you're taking a bath or shower.

### The Facts on Earwax

You might wonder about earwax and whether it needs to be cleaned out. Actually, even though earwax seems yucky, it serves a purpose. Your ear canal makes earwax to protect the ear. If you want, you can clean the opening of your ear gently with a washcloth. You should not put anything in your ear smaller than your elbow. You can hurt your ear by poking around in there. It's not even a good idea to

use a cotton swab. This can push wax deeper in your ear, where it can get stuck. Irritating the ear canal can even lead to an ear canal infection. .

### Nails

- Keep nails clean. Trim them regularly.
- Do not cut cuticles or use chemicals on them.
- Clip hangnails to avoid tearing skin. Never bite or pull them.
- To help prevent ingrown toenails, cut nails straight across.