# Why is personal hygiene important?

Practicing good personal hygiene is important for helping keep the body healthy and clean.

Share on PinterestGood personal hygiene can benefit both physical and mental health.Good personal hygiene involves keeping all parts of the external body clean and healthy. It is important for maintaining both physical and mental health.In people with poor personal hygiene, the body provides an ideal environment for germs to grow, leaving it vulnerable to infection.On a social level, people may avoid a person with poor personal hygiene, which may result in isolation and loneliness.

## Types of personal hygiene

There are many types of personal hygiene

Dental

Dental hygiene involves more than just having white teeth. A good dental hygiene routine can help prevent issues such as [gum disease](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/241721) and cavities. It can also prevent [bad breath](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/166636).

### Body

Several million sweat glands cover the human body. When bacteria break down sweat, the process creates a smell or body odor.Washing the body will help prevent skin irritation, as well as removing the bacteria that cause [body odor](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/173478). Washing the hair removes oil and keeps a person looking clean and fresh.

### Hand washing

### Regular hand washing is one of the best ways to avoid spreading communicable diseases.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)Trusted Source](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/hand/handwashing.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) recommend washing the hands at certain times:

* before, during, and after preparing food
* before eating food
* before and after looking after anyone who is vomiting or has [diarrhea](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/158634%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
* before and after treating a cut or wound
* after going to the bathroom
* after changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
* after blowing the nose, coughing, or sneezing
* after touching garbage or dirty surfaces or objects
* after handling pets or pet-related items, such as food

### Nails

Fingernails may harbor dirt and germs, contributing to the spread of bacteria. It is easier for dirt and germs to collect under longer nails, so keeping them short can help reduce the risk of spreading infections.

## Q.How to maintain good personal hygiene

Knowing how to maintain good personal hygiene can make it easier to build a routine. A person should have some basic knowledge of the following types of hygiene:

### Dental hygiene

For a healthy mouth and smile, the [American Dental Association (ADA)](https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/brushing-your-teeth) recommend brushing the teeth for 2 minutes at least twice a day — once before breakfast and once before bed.

People should use an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste and replace the toothbrush every 3–4 months. The ADA also advise people to floss daily.

### Hand washing

The [CDCTrusted Source](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) outline five simple steps for effective hand washing:

1. Wet the hands with clean, running water, then turn off the tap and apply soap.
2. Lather the hands by rubbing them together with the soap, remembering to reach the backs of the hands, between the fingers, and under the nails.
3. Scrub the hands for at least 20 seconds, which a person can time by humming the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. Rinse the hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry the hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### Body

It is advisable to shower or bathe daily, using soap and water to rinse away dead skin cells, oil, and bacteria. People can pay special attention to areas that accumulate more sweat, such as the armpits, in between the toes, and the groin area.

They should also wash their hair with shampoo at least once a week, or more if necessary. Applying deodorant when fully dry can help prevent body odors.

### Nails

Using sanitized tools to trim the nails and keep them short is one of the best ways to ensure that no dirt can collect underneath them.

Scrubbing the underside of the nails with a nail brush can form part of a person’s hand washing routine.

Encouraging children to help clean themselves as soon as they are old enough is a good way to instigate a proper personal hygiene routine.

## Qn...Factors that can negatively impact hygiene

Poverty and lack of access to clean water can both have a detrimental effect on a person’s personal hygiene.

A person’s mental health can also affect how they take care of themselves. People who are living with certain conditions, such as a psychotic disorder, severe depression, or drug or alcohol use disorder, may find it very difficult to keep up a personal hygiene routine.