



Promoting personal hygiene among adolescent girls

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Abstract

Good personal hygiene is one of the most effective ways to protect ourselves and others from many illnesses. The study aimed to promote personal hygiene among adolescent girls of Gurgaon. The sample of the present research was 250 girls (both school goers and collegiate) of Gurgaon. These girls were selected randomly from different schools and colleges. They were then imparted information regarding hygiene, personal hygiene, importance of hygiene and how it can be maintained. Lecture method along with some teaching aids was used to impart them information regarding the same. Informal discussion was also done with them to understand them well, to know about their personal hygienic problems etc. and accordingly their queries were also sorted out. During this research it was found that they were very happy with such sessions and requested that such sessions should be conducted timely so that they can come out with their queries and get their answers there and then.

Keywords: hygiene, personal hygiene, menstruation, sweating

Introduction: What Is Hygiene

Personal hygiene refers to maintaining cleanliness of one's body and clothing to preserve overall health and well-being. It includes a number of different activities related to the following general areas of self-care: washing or bathing, including cleansing oneself after using the toilet; taking proper care of the mouth; grooming and dressing; and keeping clothing clean. Bathing, dressing and undressing, and using the toilet are considered activities of daily living. One of the most effective ways we have to protect ourselves and others from illness is good personal hygiene. 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 or condoms) 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 some cultures, it is expected that you will wash your body at least every day and use deodorants to stop body smells. Every cultures have different expectations.

Personal hygiene for women

One should wash the external genitals regularly. Do not put anything like douches into -the vagina, as the delicate skin can be damaged. Vagina does not require any special care as it can clean itself. Here are some personal hygiene suggestions for women:

Menstruation

You should wash your body, including your genital area, in the same way as you always do. Change tampons and sanitary napkins regularly, at least four to five times a day. Always

wash your hands before and after handling a tampon or any sanitary pad.

Cystitis

Is an infection of the bladder? This is a common condition for sexually active young women. Urinating after sexual intercourse can help to flush out any bacteria that may be in the urethra and bladder.

Thrush

Some soaps and detergents can irritate the skin of the vagina, and make thrush infections more likely. Some people find that they often get thrush when they use antibiotics. Use mild soap and unperfumed toilet paper. Avoid tight, synthetic underwear. Try cotton underwear, and change regularly. There is medical treatment for thrush, so talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Body odour

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

- Chemicals in sweat, including pheromones, which are made by the body and sexually attract (or repel) other people.
- Wastes excreted through the skin, such as metabolised alcohol.
- The actions of bacteria that live on the skin and feed on dead skin cells and sweat.
- Unwashed clothes, such as underwear and socks.

Hand washing

Most infections, especially colds and gastroenteritis, are caught when we put our unwashed hands, which have germs

on them, to our mouth. Some infections are caught when other people's dirty hands touch the food we eat. Hands and wrists should be washed with clean soap and water, using a brush if your fingernails are dirty. Dry your hands with something clean, such as paper towels or hot air dryers. You should always wash your hands:

- After using the toilet
- Before making or eating food
- After handling dogs or other animals
- If you have been around someone who is coughing or has a cold.

Personal hygiene for men

A build-up of secretions called smegma can form under the foreskin of uncircumcised men. If you are uncircumcised, gently pull back the foreskin when you have a shower and clean with water. You can use soap if you like, but make sure you rinse it off well.

Personal hygiene may be described as the principle of maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the external body. People have been aware of the importance of hygiene for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks spent many hours bathing, using fragrances and make up in an effort to beautify themselves and be presentable to others.

Personal Hygiene products are a billion dollar business in the commercial market, with many high profile celebrities endorsing products that aim to keep us looking our best. In fact, hygiene is actually a scientific study.

Maintaining a high level of personal hygiene will help to increase self-esteem and confidence, while minimising the chances of developing imperfections.

Poor Personal Hygiene

Failure to keep up a standard of hygiene can have many implications. Not only is there an increased risk of getting an infection or illness, but there are many social and psychological aspects that can be affected.

Poor Personal Hygiene, in relation to preventing the spread of disease is paramount in preventing epidemic or even pandemic outbreaks. To engage in some very basic measures could help prevent many coughs and colds from being passed from person to person.

Aspects of Personal Hygiene

There are many contributory factors that make up personal hygiene with the main ones being washing, oral care, hair care, nail care, wound care, cleansing of personal utensils and Preventing Infection.

Personal hygiene is as it says, personal. Everybody has their own habits and standards that they have been taught or that they have learnt from others. It is essentially the promotion and continuance of good health.

Diseases Caused By Poor Hygiene

Bacterial

- Food poisoning.
- Gastroenteritis.
- Diarrhoea.
- Pneumonia
- Skin infection.

To minimize the risk of infection and maintain health, basic personal hygiene habits would be helpful:

1. Bathe regularly. Wash your body and your hair often.
2. Trim your nails.
3. Brush and floss.
4. Wash your hands.
5. Sleep tight.

Good personal hygiene habits include

- Taking bath regularly
- If cant bath, a wash all over the body with a wet sponge or cloth can be done.
- Brushing teeth at least once a day.
- Washing the hair with soap or shampoo at least once a week.
- Washing hands with soap after going to the toilet.
- Washing hands with soap before & after preparing food.
- Washing hands before and after having meal.
- Wear clean clothes.
- Dirty clothes should be washed properly before wearing them again
- Hanging clothes in the sun to dry. The sun's rays will kill some disease-causing germs and parasites
- Maintain a distance from other people and covering the nose and mouth with a tissue or the hand when coughing or sneezing.

Discussion

The underlying reason for conducting this Intervention to promote personal hygiene which aim to reduce the incidence of skin infections, gastrointestinal infections, upper respiratory tract infection, urinary tract infections and respiratory diseases (including otitis media), conditions commonly experienced by children living in remote Indigenous communities in India. Overall this research has proved that Intervention is needed for bringing awareness among adolescents so that they are well equipped with required information. During an informal discussion with the adolescents, it was observed that parental involvement for providing proper knowledge was minimal so they were very happy with this interactive session and requested that related information on such sensitive issues should be imparted timely so that they can come out with their queries and get their answers there and then. Similar study was conducted by Mahajan P & Sharma N (2004) revealed that perceived relationships of adolescent girls with their mothers play an important role in the transfer of knowledge regarding issues in family life education. Another study was conducted by Mahajan P & Sharma N (2006) found that parents believe that that should make their children aware about importance of health which is only possible by inculcating hygiene guidelines and emphasising importance of nutrition to them. Hence, parental involvement for providing proper knowledge should be enhanced during adolescent years. So there is a need to teach adolescents about their body organs, their functions and maintenance of personal hygiene since ignorance perpetuates myths and mis-belief. In societies such as ours where parents don't normally discuss such matters with their children, this could be achieved by incorporating family life education/sex education in school curricula.

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