

Mosby: Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

Procedure Guideline for Performing a Complete or Partial Bed Bath

1. Verify the health care provider's orders.
2. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
3. Perform hand hygiene.
4. Provide for patient privacy.
5. Introduce yourself to the patient and family if present.
6. Identify the patient using two identifiers, such as name and date of birth or name and account number, according to agency policy. Compare these identifiers with the information on the patient's identification bracelet.
7. Assess the patient's tolerance for bathing and activity, comfort level, cognitive ability and musculoskeletal function. Assess for shortness of breath. Before or during the bath, assess the condition of the patient's skin.
8. Encourage the patient to void prior to beginning the bath. Offer the patient a bedpan or urinal. Provide a towel and washcloth.
9. Apply clean gloves.
10. Arrange all supplies on the overbed table
11. Raise the bed to a comfortable working height. Lower the rail on your side, and help the patient assume a comfortable supine position, maintaining body alignment. Bring the patient toward the same side.
12. Place a bath blanket over the patient. Have the patient hold the top of the bath blanket, and remove the top sheet from beneath the bath blanket without exposing the patient. Place soiled linen in the dirty linen bag.
13. Remove the patient's gown or pajamas:
 - A. Whether or not the patient has an intravenous line, simply unsnap the sleeves and remove the gown.
 - B. If an extremity is *injured* or has reduced mobility, begin removal from the *unaffected* side first.
 - C. If the patient has an intravenous line and is wearing a gown with no snaps, remove the gown from the arm *without* the intravenous line first. Then remove the gown from the arm with the intravenous line. Pause the intravenous fluid infusion by pressing the appropriate sensor on the intravenous pump. Remove the intravenous line from the pole, and slip the intravenous container and tubing through the arm of the patient's gown. Rehang the intravenous container, and restart the intravenous fluid infusion by pressing the appropriate sensor on the intravenous pump. If intravenous fluids are infusing by gravity, check the intravenous flow rate and regulate it if necessary. **Do not disconnect the intravenous tubing to remove the gown.**
14. Raise the side rails and lower the bed to a comfortable working height for the bath.
15. Fill a washbasin two thirds full of warm water. Check the water temperature, and have the patient place his or her fingers in the water to test temperature tolerance. Place a plastic bottle of body lotion in the bathwater to warm, if desired. Remove the pillow if the patient's condition allows. Raise the head of the bed 30 to 45 degrees. Place a bath towel under the patient's head. Place a second bath towel over the

patient's chest

16. Wash the face:

- A. Inquire whether the patient is wearing contact lenses.
- B. Immerse the washcloth and wring it out thoroughly. Form a mitt with a washcloth.
- C. Wash the patient's eyes with plain warm water, using a clean area of the cloth for each eye, bathing from the inner to the outer canthus. Soak any crusts on the eyelid for 2 to 3 minutes with a damp cloth before attempting to remove them. Dry gently and thoroughly around the eyes.
- D. Ask if the patient wishes to use soap on the face. Then wash, rinse, and dry the forehead, cheeks, nose, neck, and ears. Ask male patients if they would like to be shaved.
- E. Provide eye care for the unconscious patient.
 - i. Instill prescribed eyedrops or ointment per the physician's order.
 - ii. In the absence of a blink reflex, keep the eyelids closed. Close each eye gently, using the back of your fingertip, before taping in place an eye patch or shield. Do not tape the eyelid itself.

17. Wash the upper extremities and trunk:

- A. Remove the bath blanket from beneath the patient's arm that is closer to you. Place the bath towel lengthwise under the arm. Bathe with water and minimal soap, using long, firm strokes and moving in a distal to proximal (fingers to axilla) direction. Rinse and dry the arm.
- B. Wash the hands and nails. Fold a bath towel in half, and lay it on the bed beside the patient. Place a washbasin on the towel. Immerse the patient's hand, and allow it to soak for 3 to 5 minutes, if necessary, before cleaning beneath the fingernails. Remove the basin, and rinse and dry the hand well.
- C. Raise and support the arm above the patient's head (if possible) to wash, rinse, and dry the axilla thoroughly. Apply deodorant to the axilla as needed or desired.
- D. Move to the other side of the bed, and repeat these steps with the patient's other arm, axilla, hand, and nails.
- E. Cover the patient's chest with a bath towel, and fold the bath blanket down to the umbilicus. Bathe the chest, using long, firm strokes. Take special care with the skin beneath a female patient's breasts, lifting each breast upward, if necessary, using the back of the hand. Rinse and dry well.
- F. Check the temperature of the bath water, and change the water if necessary.

18. Wash the abdomen:

- A. Place a bath towel—two if necessary—lengthwise over the chest and abdomen. Fold the bath blanket down to just above the pubic region. Bathe, rinse, and dry the abdomen, paying special attention to the umbilicus and the surrounding skin folds of the abdomen and groin. Keep the abdomen covered between washing and rinsing. Dry well.
- B. Put a clean gown or pajama top on the patient by dressing the affected side first. If you wish, you can postpone this step until the bath has been completed.

19. Wash the lower extremities:

- A. Cover the chest and abdomen with the top of the bath blanket. Expose the leg closer to you by folding the blanket toward the midline. Be sure the other leg and

- the perineum remain draped. Place the towel lengthwise under the leg.
- B. Wash the leg, using long, firm strokes and moving from ankle to knee, and then from knee to thigh. As you work, assess for signs of redness, swelling, or pain. Thoroughly rinse and dry the leg.
 - C. Wash the foot, making sure to clean between the toes. Clean and file the nails as needed, or per agency policy. Rinse and dry the toes and feet completely. (Option: Soaking the feet in warm water for 10 minutes can help maintain the cleanliness of the nails and feet; however, do not soak the feet of patients with diabetes.)
 - D. Remove the towel, raise the side rail, move to the other side of the bed, lower the side rail, and repeat Steps 15 A, B, and C for the other leg and foot. Apply a light layer of moisturizing lotion to both feet. Place soiled towels in the dirty linen bag.
 - E. While the patient is supine, provide perineal care. See the video skills on performing male and female perineal care.
 - F. Cover the patient with a bath blanket, raise the side rail, and change the bathwater.
20. Wash the back:
- A. Apply a clean pair of gloves. Lower the side rail. Help the patient assume a prone or side-lying position (as applicable). Place a clean towel lengthwise along the patient's side or back.
 - B. If fecal material is present, enclose it in a fold of underpad or toilet tissue, and clean the area with disposable wipes.
 - C. Keep the patient draped by sliding the bath blanket over the shoulders and thighs during bathing. Wash, rinse, and dry the back from neck to buttocks, using long, firm strokes.
 - D. Cleanse the buttocks and anus, moving from front to back. Pay special attention to the folds of the buttocks and anus. Rinse and dry the area thoroughly. If needed, place a clean absorbent pad under the patient's buttocks.
 - E. If the patient's skin is intact, remove your gloves, and give the patient a back massage if he or she would like one. See the video skill on performing a back massage.
 - F. Apply body lotion to the skin and topical moisturizing agents to dry, flaky, reddened, or scaling areas. When you are finished, cover the patient with a bath blanket. Put a clean gown or pajama top on the patient by dressing the affected side first, if not done earlier.
21. Alternatively, if the patient is having a disposable bed bath, do the following:
- A. Warm the product by following the package directions. The cleansing pack contains 8 to 10 premoistened towels.
 - B. Use a new premoistened towel for each general area of the body to be cleansed. Follow the same order of cleansing as for a complete or partial bed bath.
 - C. Allow the skin to air dry for 30 seconds. It is permissible to lightly cover the patient with a bath towel to prevent chilling.
 - D. Excessive soiling (for example, in the perineal region) may require an extra cleansing pack or conventional washcloths, soap and water, and towels.
22. Assist the patient with grooming. Comb the patient's hair. Be aware that female patients might wish to apply cosmetics. Apply gloves, and make the patient's bed.
23. Remove soiled linen, and place it in the dirty linen bag. Do not allow linen to contact

your uniform. Clean and replace bathing equipment. Remove gloves, and perform hand hygiene.

24. Check the function and position of external devices, such as indwelling catheters, nasogastric tubes, intravenous tubes, and braces.
25. Replace the call light, and neatly arrange personal possessions. To ensure the patient's safety, place the bed in the locked, low position with at least two but no more than three side rails raised. Make sure the patient is as comfortable as possible.
26. Dispose of used supplies and equipment.
27. Perform hand hygiene.
28. Document and report the patient's response and expected or unexpected outcomes. Record the procedure including how much the patient participated and how well the patient tolerated the bath. Document the condition of the skin and any significant findings.