

How to Have Good Hygiene (Girls)

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Good hygiene can help you feel better and look nicer. It's okay if you don't know where to start, or if you need help dealing with changes your body is going through. Many young women go through this! Having great hygiene is as easy as staying clean, having good daily habits, and practicing a cleanly beauty routine.

Method 1

Method 1 of 4: Staying Clean



1 Shower or bathe every day or every two days. Bacteria feed on the sweat and skin cells that accumulate on your body throughout the day – that's what causes body odor.

Shower or bathe every day and use a mild soap to wash off the day's dirt.^[1] Especially wash and carefully dry your feet, face, hands, armpits, and bottom.^[2]

- In addition to your daily bath or shower, take one after you exercise or get sweaty to keep skin clean.^[3]
- It doesn't really matter if you shower at night or in the morning; this is personal preference.
- Don't use soap to clean your private parts; this will disturb your natural chemical balance down there. Clean around your inner thighs and around your vulva with mild soap, but just wash the outer and inner parts of your vulva (the exterior part of your vagina) with warm water.^[4] Your vagina is good at cleaning itself with natural discharge (the clear fluid that comes from your vagina).^[5]
- Deodorant and perfume do not replace daily bathing or showering.^[6]



2 Shampoo and condition your hair. Shampoo your hair 2-3 times a week. Washing your hair too often removes the natural oil and can make your hair dry.^[7] Choose shampoo and conditioner that's right for you – whether your hair is dry, oily, frizzy, straight, or curly, there are many products that you can try.^[8]

- Wet your hair with warm water. Pour a quarter-size amount of shampoo into your palm and massage it (not too hard) into your scalp and down to the tips of your hair. Wash the shampoo out then apply conditioner, using more for dry hair and less for oily hair. Let it sit in your hair for a few minutes while you clean your body, then rinse it out well.
- If your hair gets oily near your scalp after a day or two, wash your hair daily or every other day using a mild shampoo. Use conditioner only on the tips of your hair, not on your scalp. Use “non-greasy” or “oil-free” styling products.^[9]



3 Wash your face twice a day. Use warm water and a gentle, non-abrasive cleanser to wash your face in the morning and before bed. Use just your fingertips to massage the cleanser onto your skin – using a washcloth or sponge can be irritating. Don't scrub your skin hard. Rinse with warm water, and pat (don't rub) your skin dry with a clean towel. ^[10]

- Avoid products that exfoliate your skin or contain alcohol. Don't use regular soap. These products are too harsh for your face.
- If your skin is flaky, itchy, or dry, apply a dime-size amount of face moisturizer. If your skin feels irritated a lot or gets oily easily, use products for **sensitive skin**.
- Also, wash your face after working out or sweating.



4 Wear clean clothes. You don't necessarily have to wash your clothes every time you wear them, but always wear clothes without stains, wrinkles, and smells on them. If you get your clothes dirty or sweat in them, wash them before wearing them again. Wear fresh underwear and a fresh bra every day. Change socks as needed for comfort and to avoid bad smells. This may be more than daily, or it might be less if you only wore them for a few hours around the house without shoes.^[1]

- Change your bed sheets every week, or more often if you sweat a lot during the night. Change your pillowcases weekly or every 2-3 days if you have oily skin.



5 Wash your hands often. You should wash your hands regularly throughout the day, but especially after using the bathroom, after sneezing or coughing, before making or touching food, and after touching things that lots of other people have touched (for example, after handling money – think about how many people touch money!)

- Wet your hands with warm water, then lather soap in your hands for at least 20 seconds – be sure to wash your wrists, in between your fingers, and under your nails. Rinse your hands well then dry them with a paper towel, and turn off the water with the paper towel.^[12]



6 Carry small products around with you. Make a mini-hygiene kit to keep in your purse or backpack. Bring a packet of breath mints, gum, or a small bottle of mouthwash for after meals. Pack a small travel mirror, hand sanitizer, deodorant, a pack of Kleenex, and a small comb for everyday use.



7 Have good illness hygiene. If you're sick, it's important to practice good hygiene to protect others. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands a lot, especially after coughing or sneezing. If you're vomiting or have a fever, stay home and away from others.^[13]

Method 2 of 4: Practicing Good Grooming



1 Use deodorant daily. It's normal to have body odor, especially under your arms. Your armpits naturally sweat more once you go through puberty, and underarm hair can trap sweat and bacteria.^[14] Wear deodorant every day to feel and smell fresh. There are lots of different kinds of deodorant – roll-on, spray, stick, and those with or without antiperspirant (decreases sweating as well as covers odor). Some are perfumed and others are unscented. It's up to you which kind to choose.^[15]

- Different deodorants are marketed towards men and women, but really the only thing that's different is how they smell.



2 Shave, if you want to. Whether or not you want to [shave your legs](#), [underarms](#), and private area is completely up to you. Long hair in your armpits and groin might trap moisture and odors, but showering regularly and keeping the area clean and dry should solve that. If you do shave, do it safely and hygienically:^[16]

- Use clean, new, sharp razor blades and plenty of shaving cream or gel (not just regular soap). Never dry shave!
- Take your time and go slowly. Ask your mom, aunt, or older sister for help or advice.
- Do not shave your face. Pluck stray hairs or tweezers or try a bleach, cream, or wax that is formulated for facial hair. If you have lots of facial hair, see your doctor and ask about electrolysis or laser hair removal to get rid of it for good.^[17] ^[18]
- Use a non-greasy moisturizing lotion after you shave to keep your skin from drying out. Never use men's aftershave – it stings!



3 Manage your pubic hair. Shaving your pubic hair might make the skin in that area itchy, irritated, or prone to ingrown hairs and folliculitis (infection of the hair follicle).^[19] Remember that it's only up to you how you want to groom down there. You can shave your “bikini area” on your inner thighs and leave pubic hair natural, keep your pubic hair (carefully) trimmed with scissors, or stay completely natural. Just be sure to wash well in the shower. If you do decide to shave, follow these guidelines:^[20]

- Use clean scissors to trim long hair first to make shaving easier (do this over the toilet so you don't make a mess). Make sure no one else uses those scissors!
- Soak in a hot bath or shower for a few minutes to soften the hair and skin.
- Use a safety-razor (no straight blades or disposables), preferably with moisture strips.
- Pull the skin tight and smooth, and shave in the direction of hair growth – be gentle, don't apply much pressure.
- Rinse off with warm water, pat the area dry, and use baby oil, aloe, or a non-perfumed moisturizer on your skin.
- See the articles [Trim Your Pubic Hair](#), [Shave Your Pubic Hair](#), [Deal With Pubic Hair](#), or [Look After Your Pubic Hair](#) for specific instructions.



4 Have good dental hygiene. Brush your teeth, floss, and use mouthwash at least twice a day – after breakfast and before bed. This decreases tooth decay, gum disease, and bad breath. Try to use toothpaste or mouthwash with fluoride.^[21] If you have braces or aligners, you may want to brush after every meal.

- Gently use your toothbrush to brush your tongue, too.
- Get a new toothbrush every 3 months, or after you're sick with something contagious like strep throat.^[22]
- See your dentist about twice a year for checkups and cleanings.^[23]



5 Clean your retainer **or aligner well**. Yeast and bacteria can live on your appliance or appliance case if you don't clean it well. Brush your appliance case every time you brush your teeth, and disinfect it once a week.^[24]

- For retainers, put some denture cleaner like Efferdent or Polident in a cup of warm water, and let your retainer soak. Rinse it well before using it again.^[25]



6 **Keep your contact lenses clean**. If you wear contact lenses, it's important to keep them as clean as possible to prevent eye infections. Don't just rinse them with tap water and reuse them, or reuse the same contact solution day after day – this is setting you up to put bacteria in your eye! Rinse your contacts well every time you take them out, clean your contact case thoroughly, and use fresh contact solution. Be sure to replace your contact case regularly, about every 3 months.^[26] ^[27]



7 Maintain healthy feet. It's normal for your feet and shoes to start to smell, but you should try to keep this under control. Make sure your feet are dry before putting on socks and shoes. Alternate which shoes you wear, and let your shoes air out overnight somewhere ventilated (not the bottom of your closet).^[28] Wear socks with closed-toed shoes, and choose cotton socks instead of synthetic fibers.^[29]

- If you have red, itchy, or scaly patches between your toes or on your feet, you might have Athlete's foot. Avoid this by wearing flip-flops in school and locker room showers instead of going barefoot. If you need to, use an over-the-counter foot powder, or see your doctor for help.^[30]



8 Don't share personal items. It's nice to share, but not when it comes to things like your toothbrush, razor blade, or hairbrush. Keep your personal hygiene items to yourself, and don't use other people's personal items. Also, keep your own towels and washcloths.^[31]

Method 3 of 4: Dealing with Your Period (if you have one)



1 Change your feminine hygiene products regularly. On average, you probably need to use three to six pads or tampons per day. For heavier flow (the first few days of your period) and at night, use longer, heavier pads with wings (side protectors) to prevent spilling. **Change your pad or tampon** every four to eight hours, depending on your flow.^[32] Never wear a tampon for more than eight hours because of the risk of toxic shock syndrome (TSS).^[33] ^[34]

- Don't be embarrassed if you accidentally bleed into your underwear or on your sheets. This happens to most women at some point. Rinse the linen with cold water and immediately put it in the wash.
- During your period, wear dark underwear and clothes. That way accidental spotting will be less noticeable. If this happens at school or in public, tie a sweatshirt around your waist to cover up until you get home.^[35]
- Getting comfortable with tampons can help if you like to swim, play sports, or be active. Tampons with applicators are easier to use than those without. If **using a tampon** is still uncomfortable, try a bit of vaginal lubricant on the end before inserting it. However, do not use petroleum jelly due to the risk of infection.^[36] ^[37]
- You can also try alternate products during your period, like cups or THINX period undies.



2 Shower regularly. It's not only okay to **shower during your period**, it's important to do so. Showering helps you feel clean, and the warm water can **improve menstrual cramps**. Shower like normal, washing your vagina with warm water. When you're done, pat yourself dry with a dark colored towel to avoid staining linens, or dry your vagina with paper towels first. Then use a fresh pad, tampon, or cup before getting dressed.

- You can remove tampons and cups before showering, but you don't have to. Of course, take off your underwear and dispose of your pad first.
- If you're bleeding heavily, you should probably avoid taking a bath. The running water in a shower will wash blood away better than still bath water.
- Rinse any residue out of the shower when you're done – don't leave it for the next person.



3 Keep track of your period. The best way to avoid accidentally bleeding into your underwear or being caught without tampons when you need them is to know generally when to expect your period.^[38] There are many websites and apps for this, like WebMD's Ovulation Calculator. Or use a journal, diary, or period calendar. Write down the first day of your period, and keep track over several months.

- The average menstrual cycle is 28 days long, but this can vary a lot. Count from the first day of your period one month to the first day of your period the next month. If you take an average over three months, you'll probably have a good idea how long your cycle is. For example, if it's 29 days one month, 30 days the next month, and 28 days the third month, add all these together and divide by 3 months – your average cycle is 29 days long. However, keep in mind that your period can vary a lot while you are a teen and it may range from 21 to 45 days.^[39]
- If you have an **irregular cycle**, talk to your parent or a doctor for advice and possible treatment.



4 Ask for help. If you're not sure how to use a tampon, need help buying hygiene products, or have questions or concerns about your period, ask an older relative for advice. Remember that your mom, aunt, and older sister went through this at some point, too! You can also talk to your doctor, if that feels more comfortable.

Method 4 of 4: Keeping a Hygienic Beauty Routine



1 Treat your acne. If you get pimples, use a gentle, non-abrasive, and alcohol-free acne treatment. Don't vigorously scrub your skin when you wash your face, because this takes away the natural oils and can make your skin dry, flaky, and can even cause more acne.^[40] Try to [treat your acne naturally](#), or talk to your doctor about products you can use.

- Ask your doctor for a referral to a dermatologist if you have acne that won't go away within four to eight weeks of using an over-the-counter treatment or if your acne is painful.^[41] There are medications you can take, but some of them, like Accutane, have lots of side effects.^[42]
- Never use your fingernails to scrape your skin or pick at acne scabs. Squeezing, popping, or picking at pimples can cause infections and leave scarring.^[43]



2 Don't overdo your makeup. If you feel self-conscious about your skin you might be tempted to go heavy on your makeup. However, wearing too much makeup can make your skin dry or oily and cause breakouts. Only apply light layers of foundation and use makeup minimally for a **natural, healthy look**.

- There are techniques you can use to **hide acne** with makeup.



3 Care for your nails. Keep your finger and toenails trimmed and free of jagged edges. Clean underneath your nails when you wash your hands (and feet), and use an under nail scraper to get dirt out from under your nails if you need to.^[44] Use sharp clippers or small manicure scissors to cut straight across your nail, and round out the corners in a gentle curve with a nail file. Use hand lotion on your nails and cuticles.^[45]

- **Don't bite your nails** or pull off hangnails. This can cause an infection and look messy. Use clean nail clippers, instead.^[46]
- Paint your nails if you want to! Or just apply a protective layer of nail hardener or top-coat for some shine.^[47] Only use acetone-free nail polish remover.^[48]



4 Wear some nice perfume, but not too much. If you want to wear perfume or body spray, go for it! Just avoid wearing too much. This can be overpowering and unpleasant to some people. Spray your perfume two to three times in front of you and then walk through it – this will give you a nice smell without being overpowering.

- Do not dunk your hairbrush in perfume or spray perfume directly onto your hair. This can dry your hair out.
- Remember, wearing perfume does not take the place of taking a bath or shower every day.



Expert Q&A

Question

I am 14 years old. Is it okay to use baby soap to wash my skin?



Sarah Gehrke, RN, MS
Registered Nurse
Expert Answer

Many dermatologists actually recommend baby soap products to teens, adolescents, and adults! The soap is generally gentle and non-irritating to dry and sensitive skin. So whether you are 14 or 44, the baby soap is fine.

Helpful 370 Not Helpful 24

Question

How often do I change the towels I dry myself with after a shower?



Sarah Gehrke, RN, MS
Registered Nurse
Expert Answer

You can use bath towels that you are using once a day to dry off after a shower up to three times before they need to be washed.

Helpful 186 Not Helpful 36

Question

Why do I have to wash my face twice a day?



Community Answer

The first wash is to remove any oils and/or dirt that have built up while you were sleeping, and the second is to remove any dirt, oil, or makeup before going to sleep.

Helpful 296 Not Helpful 16

Question

Is it okay to wash my face with soap? Because when I do, it leaves my face really dry.



Thinker52
Community Answer

It's best to wash your face with a cleanser that's made specifically for faces, it's gentler and easier on your skin. Your skin should not feel too tight or dry after washing it, so think about buying a face cleanser. If your skin still feels dry, find a face moisturizer to put on after you wash it.

Helpful 146 Not Helpful 10

Question

Do I have to use mouthwash and floss every day?



Thinker52
Community Answer

No, it's not a necessity, but your teeth will thank you if you do.

Helpful 136 Not Helpful 11

Question

My friends at school say I stink. How can I get rid of this odor?



Thinker52
Community Answer

Shower every day and make sure to wash your face, armpits, and private parts with soap. You should also wash your hair, but every day isn't necessary. Also, use a deodorant to keep the body odor at bay. It's also important to wash your clothes every week (which may seem obvious), because sweat and body odor sticks to clothes.

Helpful 217 Not Helpful 17

Question

Why do I need to change my underwear every day?



Thinker52
Community Answer

The reason you would want to change your underwear every day is because the body sweats, whether you are male or female, big or small. Bacteria will breed and live in warm, moist, dark areas. If you don't want to have bacteria infections, or a number of other health problems, wash and change your underwear daily. Not to mention the smell that dirty underwear can produce.

Helpful 156 Not Helpful 10

Question

How do I get rid of bad breath?



Community Answer

Brushing your teeth, flossing, drinking plenty of water, using mouthwash, and sugar-free mints and gum will all help with bad breath.

Helpful 161 Not Helpful 14

Question

Is there any tips to keep my lips looking healthy?



Community Answer

Apply plenty of petroleum jelly and lip balm every thirty minutes or so, or before bed.

Helpful 235 Not Helpful 23

Question

I always have bad breath although I wash my teeth twice a day and I prevent eating onions or garlic. What should I do?



Thinker52
Community Answer

Make sure to brush your tongue when brushing--70% of bad breath is caused by the tongue. Also, you may want to floss more. Check with your dentist, you could have halitosis. As long as you brush and floss, you should be good. You can also chew gum or carry breath mints around for a quick fix.

Helpful 85 Not Helpful 4

[See more answers](#)



Tips

- Everybody is different and the steps listed here may not work for you specifically. Work out a hygiene routine that works for you and makes you feel good about yourself!
- Stay healthy and fit to feel and look your best. Eat healthy, drink lots of water, and [exercise](#) regularly.^[49]
- Don't wash inside your private area with soap. Don't use scented soaps or body washes to clean it. Don't spray your perfume in your underwear. This can be very harmful!
- Change your bed sheets often, as they can build up odor-causing bacteria.
- Showering in the morning rather than at night may be better because your body sweats at night.



Warnings

- As you get older and closer to puberty, you might start to notice light layers of clear or whitish mucous in your underwear. This is normal and nothing to worry about! However, see a doctor if the discharge is greenish in color, smells fishy, or looks like cottage cheese.^[50]

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