



AVERT “NEGATIVE” BATHING BEHAVIORS

- In the “good old days”, most people did not bathe and change their clothes as often as we do today. Taking a bath once a week may have been the way the person did things in his or her home, so bathing more often may be a source of upset to them.
- Bathing is a very personal and private activity. It makes many people feel very embarrassed when someone sees them without clothes on.
- When a caregiver has to assist a resident take a bath, it makes the resident realize that they have lost their independence.
- Try to figure out the best time for the resident’s bath. Try to stay with the person’s old bathing routine before they developed Alzheimer’s disease.
- Figure out when the resident is most relaxed, and what type of bathing they would prefer – bath, shower, stand up wash.
- Make sure the bathroom is warm and inviting.
- Give the resident as much privacy as is safe, close curtains/doors.
- Provide plenty of lighting in the bathroom.
- Try showing the resident bathing instructions written by a doctor on a prescription pad, such as:” Bathe 2-3 times weekly.”
- Prepare the bath ahead of time. Check the water level – should not be deeper than 6 inches.
- Lay out the soap, towel and clean clothes in sequence so that the resident doesn’t have to wait.
- Use a calm, quiet tone when announcing the resident’s bath is ready.
- Explain to the resident one step at a time what to do. Use visual cues when needed.
- If the resident refuses, don’t argue with him or her to the point of getting them agitated. Wait until the person is in a good mood and then try to get them into the bath.
- Let the resident feel the water before getting into a tub or shower. Using a rubber hose attachment lets you control the direction of the water and is less irritating.
- If bathing is difficult a stand-up sink washing is acceptable.
- Offer a reward after the bath – something to eat or an activity.
- If possible make the bath separate from hair washing.
- Try giving the resident a wash cloth and their soap to hold. This can give a resident a feeling of entitlement and occupy them so they are not that concerned with what you are doing.
- Protect the resident’s dignity by covering them up to make the resident feel less self-conscious about being undressed.
- Play soft music to calm and soothe the resident.
- Avoid forcing or arguing with the resident which can create a negative emotional memory connected with the caregiver.
- Avoid using a commode chair when bathing as this encourages incontinence.
- Encourage the resident to do as much of the bathing as possible.