

PERSONAL CARE

The loss of fine motor control and balance that comes with Parkinson's disease (PD) can make it difficult to perform simple tasks such as brushing your teeth, bathing, using the toilet, brushing your hair, applying make-up and numerous other personal activities that make up our daily routines.

Looking after your own personal hygiene is an essential part of maintaining your independence and has a direct impact on your self-esteem. Here are some suggestions to make these personal and important tasks a little easier:

- **Allow plenty of time** to complete your self-care without rushing. After completing your personal care, you may need to rest for a while.
- **Don't lock the bathroom door.** Have an 'occupied' notice instead. If you get into difficulties, it will be easier for someone to help you.
- **Use pre-moistened towelettes** to clean yourself after using the toilet.
- **Use absorbent (cotton) underwear.**
- Some people with PD perspire profusely at times and others have the sensation that they have an odour. **Use an effective antiperspirant/deodorant** and wear cotton undergarments.
- **Use electric personal care devices**, such as an electric razor, a hairdryer with a brush attachment and an electric toothbrush.
- Callused feet and poorly clipped nails contribute to difficulty walking, so it is important to **look after your feet carefully**. If you find it difficult to bend down or use small scissors or clippers, ask a family member for help. Alternatively, see a podiatrist or esthetician.
- Always **use the 'disabled' washroom** when you are in public buildings. You may need the extra space to move about safely and comfortably.
- For more suggestions, see the Dressing and Bathroom Help Sheets in this series.

Source: Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

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