

**Delaware Technical Community College**

**Nursing Department**

**Complete bed bath checklist**

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|  | **PROCEDURE STEPS** |
| 1. | Reviews the patient’s chart for activity orders and position restrictions. |
| 2. | Obtains needed equipment: bath basin, towels (two or three), washcloths (two or three), soap, bath blanket, clean gown or pajamas (obtains a snap-shoulder gown if the patient has an IV), laundry bag, and clean linens for occupied bed change. |
| 3. | Places a “Bath in Progress” sign on the door. |
| 4. | Follows the “Initial Implementation Steps.” |
| 5. | Fills the bath basin approximately two-thirds of the way full with warm water (105°F [40.6°C]). Tests the temperature by applying water to the inner wrist to determine that it is not too warm. |
| 6. | Places the basin on the overbed table and positions the table parallel to the bed. Lowers the side rail nearest you. Assists the patient to move closer to him or her. |
| 7. | Removes the blanket or bedspread. Spreads the bath blanket over the top sheet. Asks the patient to hold on to the bath blanket while removing the sheet from beneath it. |
| 8. | Unties the patient’s gown and removes it. |
| 9. | Places a towel under the patient’s head to protect the pillow. |
| 10. | Folds a washcloth into a mitt around your hand. |
| 11. | Washes one eye using a corner of the bath mitt. Washes from the inner *canthus* (corner of the eye) to the outer canthus. Repeats with the opposite eye and a different corner of the washcloth. |
| 12. | Washes the face without soap. Uses any special facial cleanser the patient may provide. Washes the neck and ears. Rinses the face, neck, and ears, and pats dry. |
| 13. | Exposes the arm farthest away by folding the bath blanket away from the arm but keeping the rest of the patient covered. |
| 14. | Removes the towel from beneath the patient’s head and places it lengthwise beneath the far arm. |
| 15. | Washes and rinses the far hand and arm using long strokes from the hand to the axilla. |
| 16. | Pats the arm dry using the towel beneath it. Repeats for the near arm. |
| 17. | Applies deodorant to the axillae according to the patient’s preference. *Note:* If the towel has become damp, obtains a new towel. If the water is cool or dirty, empties the basin and obtains fresh water. |
| 18. | Places the towel horizontally across the patient’s chest. Folds the bath blanket back to the patient’s waist. |
| 19. | Folds the towel toward the waist while washing and rinsing the chest. For female patients, lifts each breast to wash and rinse beneath them. Assesses for skin breakdown, because it often occurs in skinfolds. Dries thoroughly beneath each breast. |
| 20. | Replaces the towel over the chest and folds upward to expose the abdomen. Washes, rinses, and dries the abdomen. *Note:* If the towel has become damp, obtains a new towel. If the water is cool or dirty, empties the basin and obtains fresh water. |
| 21. | Replaces the bath blanket over the chest and folds back to expose the far leg. Places the towel lengthwise under the leg. |
| 22. | Washes and rinses the far leg, using long strokes from ankle to hip. |
| 23. | Assists the patient to bend the knee and place the foot flat on the bed. Brings the basin to the bed and places it by the patient’s foot. Assists the patient to place the foot into the bath basin and allows it to soak. |
| 24. | Washes the foot carefully. Washes between the toes and inspects for reddened areas or skin lesions. |
| 25. | Removes the basin to the overbed table. Pats the foot and leg dry using the towel beneath the leg. |
| 26. | Repeats the procedure with the near leg. *Note:* If the towel has become damp, obtains a new towel. If the water is cool or dirty, empties the basin and obtains fresh water. |
| 27. | Assists the patient to turn onto his or her side so the back is facing you. Places a dry towel lengthwise along the back. |
| 28. | Folds the bath blanket up to expose the patient’s back. Washes and rinses the back, then pats it dry with the towel. Performs a back massage. |
| 29. | Washes the rectal area. Separates the buttocks and cleans the area well. Assesses for skin breakdown in the gluteal folds. If the patient has been incontinent of stool, cleans the area with toilet tissue first, then washes with the washcloth. |
| 30. | Washes, rinses, and dries with towel placed earlier. Covers any soiled area on the sheet with a towel or bed protector until the bath is completed and the sheets can be changed. |
| 31. | Changes the water. Rinses out the basin and wipes it clean if needed. Obtains a clean washcloth and towel. |
| 32. | Assists the patient to turn onto his or her back and positions the patient for perineal care. |
| 33. | Performs perineal care and removes gloves. Washes hands. |
| 34. | Repositions the bath blanket. Assists the patient into a clean gown or pajamas. |
| 35. | Changes the occupied bed if appropriate. |
| 36. | Follows the “Ending Steps.” |
| 37. | Documents care on the flow sheet. |

Adapted: Burton, M. & Smith, D (2023). *Davis Advantage for Fundamentals of Nursing Care: Concepts, Connections, and Skills.* Philadelphia, PA: FA Davis