

Sponge bath for people confined to bed

Instructions about how to give a sponge bath to someone in bed are outlined below for situations where you do not have access to hot water from a tap.

- Dry the area thoroughly with a towel.
- Dress the person immediately after the wash to prevent them getting cold.

Equipment needed

- Soap.
- Clean face washer and towel.
- Small tub or large basin.

How to give a sponge bath

- Boil water:
 - If electricity is available use an electric kettle, jug, urn, or microwave oven
 - If gas is available, heat water on the gas jets
 - Alternative appliances such as a portable camping stove or barbecue can also be used. **These appliances must not be used indoors**
- Add cold water to a small tub or large basin followed by the hot water - one volume of hot water to 3 volumes of cold water.
- Test the temperature by placing your elbow in the water. The water should feel comfortable and warm on your elbow.
- Remove the person's clothes and keep the person warm by covering them with a blanket.
- Place a towel under a limb or down the side of the trunk to keep bedding dry.
- Using a face washer, wash the face before the rest of the body using warm soapy water.
- Wash the trunk, arms and legs one at a time to prevent the person from getting cold, using warm soapy water. Pay special attention to creases in the body.
- Dry the person thoroughly with the towel.
- Next, roll the person on their side to wash the back areas of the body and dry thoroughly with the towel.
- The genital area should be washed last. Lay the person on their back and tuck a towel under their buttocks. Bend the knees up and gently open the person's legs.
- Using downward strokes, moving from the front to the back gently wash the genital area paying special attention to creases in the skin.