

Tips for Middle School Girls and Boys:

Keeping Clean and Taking Care of Yourself

Keeping your body clean is an important part of keeping healthy. Caring about the way you look is important to feeling good about yourself. By the way, you don't need to wear the latest designer clothing to look good.

There are other things you can do which are much more important for your "image". Below are some ideas on smelling and looking your best.

Smelling Clean

Puberty is the time when special sweat glands roar into full production pouring out sweat which smells! Even if you're not heavily into puberty-style sweating yet, clothes can get stained, dirty and generally grubby, so you need to change and wash them often. Underclothes are right next to your skin and collect dead skin cells, sweat, etc. Overnight bacteria start to work on these stains so you would not smell nice if you wore them a second day.



Shoes



You spend a lot of time on your feet and your shoes are very close to the place where a very large collection of sweat glands live - your feet! Sweat gets into your shoes and then bacteria arrive. Bacteria love the moist leather or fabric environment so much that they multiply! If you have one pair of shoes for school then try to get them off as soon as you get home so that they can air and dry out overnight. If you have more than one pair then use them on alternate days to give them a better chance of drying out. Keep your shoes clean by brushing, polishing or washing. They will look better, last longer and be less

likely to smell. Most sneakers or running shoes will survive being washed by hand or even in the washing machine.

Feet

Wash your feet well at least once a day. Dry them carefully, especially between the toes where more bacteria collect than anywhere else on your skin.



Using 'Smell Nice' Products



As you enter puberty, you may want to start using a deodorant or anti-perspirant under your armpits. Be aware that some people have problems with perfumes, which can be a trigger for asthma or hay fever. **Remember:** Nothing smells better than clean skin and clothes. Perfumes are not a good substitute for a shower and wearing freshly cleaned clothes.

Hair

The hair follicles [which the hair grows from] produce oil which keeps the hair smooth. You also have sweat glands in your scalp, and dead skin cells come off the scalp. The oil, sweat and dead cells all add together and can make the hair greasy and look dirty unless you wash it regularly.

To keep your hair clean:

- Wash daily or every-other day with shampoo (cheap ones are often as good as very expensive ones).
- Massage your scalp well. This will remove dead skin cells, excess oil and dirt.
- Rinse well with clear water.
- Conditioner is helpful if you have longer hair as it makes the hair smoother and easier to comb, but hair doesn't need to have conditioner.
- Use a wide toothed comb for wet hair as it is easier to pull through.



Teeth

You should brush your teeth at least twice a day - after breakfast and before you go to bed. During the day, fill your mouth with water and swish it around to get rid of anything sticking to your teeth.



Hand Hygiene



When to wash your hands:

- before and after preparing food
- before eating food
- after using the toilet
- before and after caring for someone who is sick
- after handling pets, their food or treats
- after touching garbage

How to wash your hands:

- scrub your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds
- rinse your hands under clean, running water
- dry your hands with a clean towel (or air dry them)

Hand Hygiene Promotion is a Shared Responsibility

According to the CDC, hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of disease. Teaching children appropriate hand hygiene habits can result in the decrease of infections, absenteeism, and associated costs. Many experts agree that for hand hygiene promotion to be effective in changing behaviours, we need to ensure a family-centred approach (Scott, 2010), starting with the home and reinforced in the classroom, community and through popular media.