

QUICK TIPS

Bathing

Many people affected by dementia at a certain stage may not be keen to take a bath or shower.

It's always good to start with the question "why?", as each person will have a different reason why they are refusing or not taking their usual bath/shower.

Here are some helpful suggestions for encouraging a bath/shower:

- Encourage the bath/shower around the same time as their usual routine (e.g. After they wake up; before bed or after they eat breakfast.)
- Have clothes and towels ready to go and be sure their familiar bathing products are available.
- Help with turning on the water taps as sometimes; the person is confused about how to operate the shower/bath.
- Remind them how good they felt after having their last shower.
- Perhaps try, "I love the way you always smell when you come out of the shower!"
- You may need to run the bath with bubbles for them to visually see.
- Sometimes incentives work. (e.g. "Once you are done, we can go do your favourite thing...")
- If they complain often about how cold it is in the bathroom, try to warm up the room beforehand. And/or offer a warm towel to use to dry off.

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- Have someone else suggest the bath/shower.
- If they strongly refuse, leave and come back later.
Sometimes a different approach at a different time works.
- Offer a choice, “Do you want to take your bath/shower now or in a half hour?”
- Try encouraging a sponge bath or using a dry shampoo product if you are not having success.
- Suggest going to get their hair washed at a salon if they are having issues.
- Keep your mood positive and relaxed...not rushed
- Create a relaxed environment by having music play in the background or use some pleasant scents such as aromatherapy oils.
- Be sure that assistive equipment is in place and working properly such as a bath seat or bench, grab bars, a non-slip mat, lift equipment, etc...

Reminder: It is important to respect the person’s privacy and dignity while being mindful of their feelings, fears and apprehensions about bathing/showering.