This chapter provides you with the knowledge and skills needed to provide daily care for patients. This includes giving or assisting with oral hygiene, bathing, perineal care, care of nails and feet, back rub, changing the patient’s gown, hair care, shaving, and elimination. Special care for patients who are incontinent is also presented.

**Daily Care of the Patient**

Each patient is an individual with a special set of needs. Care must be unhurried and personalized to meet each patient’s special needs. The tasks that are listed here may seem very routine, but the nursing assistant can greatly increase the comfort of patients by performing them.

**Early Morning Care: Before Breakfast**

*(Sometimes called Early A.M. Care)*

- Offer the bedpan or urinal or assist ambulatory patient to bathroom or commode.
- Wash the patient’s hands and face.
- Help with oral hygiene.
- Pass fresh drinking water, if permitted.
- Clean the overbed table and position it to receive food tray.
- Raise the head of the bed, if permitted.
- Reposition patient as needed, if permitted.

**Morning Care: After Breakfast**

*(Sometimes called A.M. Care)*

- Before giving personal care, provide privacy for the patient.
- Offer the bedpan or urinal.
- Assist with oral hygiene.
Help the patient to bathe—follow instructions from your immediate supervisor.
Give the patient a complete bed bath, partial bed bath, shower, or tub bath.
Change the patient’s gown.
Help the male patient to shave his face, if allowed.
Make the bed.
Straighten the unit.
Reposition patient as needed, if permitted.

Afternoon Care: After Lunch
- Offer the bedpan or urinal.
- Wash the patient’s hands and face.
- Assist with oral hygiene.
- Change the patient’s gown, if necessary.
- Straighten the unit.
- Pass fresh drinking water.

Evening Care: After Supper, Before Bedtime
(Sometimes called P.M. Care)
- Offer the bedpan or urinal.
- Wash the patient’s hands and face.
- Assist with oral hygiene.
- Give a back rub, if allowed.
- Change the draw sheet, if necessary or at patient’s request.
- Smooth and tighten the sheets.
- Offer the patient an extra blanket.
- Pass fresh drinking water.

Activities of Daily Living: The Flow Sheet
In many health care facilities, the nursing assistant is required to record—check off (√) or initial—what has been done for the patient on an activities of daily living (ADL) flow sheet (Figure 12–1) or a patient care flow sheet (Figure 12–2●). Follow the nurse’s instructions regarding this documentation.

Oral Hygiene
Care of a person’s mouth and teeth is called oral hygiene. A sick person’s mouth often has a bad taste because of medications or the illness. The tongue may be covered with a grayish coating that spoils the appetite. With good care, the patient’s mouth will feel fresh and clean and may increase the desire to eat. Giving oral hygiene is an essential part of daily patient care (Figure 12–3●). Teeth should be brushed every morning, every evening, and after eating (Figure 12–4a●). Flossing teeth once a day is desirable to promote healthy gums (Figure 12–4b● and 12–4c●). In your work, you will be giving oral hygiene to