LA PICCOLA LIBRERIA

PERSONAL HYGIENE IN DEMENTIA: HANDS, NAILS, AND SHAVING

REDATTO DA DOTT. DAVIDE GALLO

Caring for Skin and Nails

As we age, our skin becomes thinner and more delicate. Proper care is essential for the comfort and well-being of a person with dementia.

- **After a bath or shower:** Make sure the skin is completely dry, especially in the folds, to prevent irritation. Use a towel to **pat,** not rub.
- **Hydration:** Take the opportunity to apply a moisturizing cream. Dry skin can be uncomfortable, and regular hydration helps keep it soft.
- **Inspection:** While drying, carefully check the skin for any redness, sores, or signs of discomfort. Report any concerns to their doctor.

Nail Care

Keeping hands and feet clean and nails tidy is important. Untrimmed nails can cause problems.

- **Timing:** The best time to trim nails is after a bath or shower, when they are softer. If that's not possible, soak their hands or feet in warm water for a few minutes.
- **Support:** People with dementia may have difficulty cutting their own nails. Offer your help. For women, a well-cared-for manicure can be a way to maintain self-esteem and a familiar pleasure.
- **Inspection:** Take the opportunity to regularly check their feet for calluses, blisters, or other problems that could cause discomfort.

Shaving

Shaving is an important habit for many people, as it helps maintain a sense of normalcy and take care of one's appearance.

- **Electric razor:** If the person accepts it, an electric razor is safer than a blade and allows them to maintain independence for longer.

- **Blade razor:** If the person uses a blade razor, they may need more supervision or your direct help. There are specific razors for caregivers, with ergonomic grips and guards.
- **Maintain the habit:** Encourage the person to shave daily or at their usual frequency. Maintaining routines helps preserve their interest in their appearance and their morale.
- **Accepting change:** If shaving becomes an insurmountable source of stress, consider letting them grow a beard.

Remember: Every person has their own history and habits. Respecting these preferences is crucial for preserving their dignity and well-being.

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