INTRODUCTION

Personal hygiene entails more than just being clean. It includes the many practices that help people be, and stay, healthy. Many of the health problems that adolescents face are linked to their activities and habits. Adolescents are active during play, exploring the world, carrying out science experiments etc, at home and in school. These activities bring them in contact with dirt, germs and chemicals. They need to be aware of the harm that these can cause and how simple measures like washing hands repeatedly can help prevent, (sometimes fatal), diseases like typhoid, cholera, worm infestation etc. from spreading. The risk of diarrhoeal infection that causes one child death every 30 seconds globally, can be reduced by 47 per cent by the simple process of washing hands with soap. Developing good habits related to sleep cycle, nutrition and cleanliness are also likely to positively impact their academic performance.

Adolescents also need to know how to take care of their evolving and changing bodies. Bathing daily, use of a proper soap, maintaining dental and oral hygiene, care of the eyes and ears, and grooming are some of the activities that adolescents need to carry out. Both girls and boys need to be aware and practice hygienic measures to promote personal hygiene too. Many adolescents have myths and misconceptions regarding personal hygiene. These may contribute to their ill health in many ways. Evidence suggests that adolescents, if they maintain proper hygiene, are less predisposed to skin infections, and other communicable diseases. Thus the habits picked up in childhood and adolescence have a long term impact on their health as adults too. Thus adolescents, many of them from vulnerable backgrounds, need appropriate information and skills now to remain disease free and maintain personal hygiene. This will not only preserve their present health but also will protect them in future and is likely to reduce deaths.

When adolescents follow the rules of good personal hygiene and living habits, they not only help themselves, but also help others. By keeping clean, students will not spread germs to others. Thus the cycle of transmission of diseases causing organisms can be broken by utilizing such simple measures. Students set a good example when they get a good night's sleep, have a proper breakfast, take good care of their teeth, exercise, bathe and eat healthy foods regularly.

The word “habit” is defined as “regularly repeated behaviour pattern”. By learning the habits of good personal hygiene, students will be able to benefit in ways suggested above. In fact, good habits learnt in adolescence are the foundation for a healthy adult life. The classroom is the right place where good hygienic practices are reinforced for promoting the health of adolescents. This session attempts to reinforce the simple yet important habits of personal hygiene that reduce skin infections and infestations, diarrhoeal diseases, and other infections.
1. Objectives:
   By the end of the session, the students will be able to:
   - Understand the importance of good personal hygiene
   - Learn habits of good personal hygiene.
   - Understand how hygienic habits promote present and future health.

2. Time:
   70 minutes
   (Two continuous periods)

3. Life Skills being used:
   Self-Awareness, Critical Thinking, Decision Making and Empathy.

4. Advance Preparations:
   1. Identify an open space where this session can be carried out,
   2. Book (Parcel) wrapped in a newspaper,
   3. Bars of soap,
   4. Combs – one for each student,
   5. Four buckets with water in them,
   6. Four mugs,
   7. Paper napkins/small towels – sufficient number,
   8. 4 mirrors,
   9. Tables

5. Linkages:
   Please see Contents

6. Methodologies:
   Game, Discussion

7. Process:
   Step 1:
   Please read the Fact Sheet carefully, and go through the session well in advance before you carry it out with the students.

   Step 2:
   Greet the students and introduce the topic. State that the session will make us aware of how hygienic practices help us remain healthy, now and in the future. **Hygiene is more than just being clean. It is defined as the many practices that help people be and stay healthy.**

   Tell them that they will play a game, “passing the parcel”. Ask them to make a circle. If the classroom does not have enough space, you can take the class to the school grounds or some other space that has sufficient space for the activity.
Step 3:
Designate one student as the “Music master” who will stand outside the circle facing away from the group. Let him start clapping. Ask the children to move the parcel (book) in the circle; the parcel stops when the music stops (i.e. the music master stops clapping). The person holding the parcel at that moment has to state a “good personal hygiene” habit. If the student is unable to come up with such a habit he must leave the circle. The “music master” starts clapping again and thus the game continues.

Step 4:
Continue the game till the participants have run out of ideas. You can help the students by hinting at some of the habits given throughout the ‘Fact Sheet’ and below in the ‘Note for Teachers’. Once they understand the concept of “good personal hygiene” there’ll be no stopping them. See to it that the simple things like washing hands regularly, cutting nails, brushing teeth etc are not missed out.

Step 5:
Now ask the students “Why are these hygienic measures important for our health?”
Expected Responses:
They save us from diseases like diarrhoea that can, at times, be fatal. They help us look neat and attractive. Regular brushing will help us have healthy teeth even in old age. We look better and attractive, they save us from many diseases and even early death in our adult life.

Note for Teachers:
The answers are correct but you have to stress that these measures could be life saving too. We can save ourselves from many deadly infectious diseases like typhoid, Cholera, non-specific diarrhoeas etc by washing hands after using the toilet and before taking our meals. State that diarrhoea causes the death of one child every 30 seconds globally. However the risk of diarrhoeal infection can be reduced by 47 per cent by the simple process of washing hands with soap. Some of the simple habits like good dental hygiene and changing underclothes daily help us remain clean and healthy in the long run too. Mention that good grooming is also an indicator of the personality. Also bring up the topic of cleaning of “private parts”. State that they too are the parts of our body and deserve to be kept clean. Share the information in the Fact Sheet with them.

Step 6:
Now tell the students that we will be playing a very interesting game. Divide them into teams. If yours is a co-educational school, ensure that girls and boys are equally divided in different teams.
Keep the four buckets of water, mugs, soap and paper napkins/towels at a distance of 25-30 feet. Spread out the buckets so that there is a distance of 3-4 feet between one bucket and the other. Allocate each bucket a number from 1-4. At a distance of another 5-6 feet from the buckets keep the combs (at least one for each student) and the mirror on a table.

State that when you say “Go!”’, the team members will run – “ONE BY ONE”- towards their allocated buckets, wash their hands and face, dry them on a towel run and pick up the comb, comb their hair and check in the mirror how they look! Ask them to keep the comb with themselves, they can carry it home. The team that does the tasks in the minimum time wins! Announce that you will check the students on whether they have actually carried out the tasks properly or not! Ask the team members to queue up. Remind them about the rules once again. Start the game by saying Go! Let the students have fun, while they are learning an important lesson. After the game is over, announce the winning team.

**Step 7:**
Ask the students to reassemble and state that we all had fun doing the simple and routine activities that contribute to our life in a meaningful way. Also state that it hardly took 2-3 minutes per student and surely we can spend that much time to keep ourselves clean and well groomed throughout the day. We must wash our hands frequently.

**Step 8:**
Now ask the students, “How can these behaviours be converted into habits? Do these habits to promote hygiene cost a lot?”

**Expected Responses:**
- By repeating the behaviours they turn into habits, By knowing how these behaviours help us , No, infact most of the habits cost nothing, some may cost us such as buying tooth paste, soap etc.
Note for Teachers:
State that most habits are just what the word “habit” means – “regularly repeated behaviour pattern”. By regularly repeating the behaviours they turn into “habits”. Emphasize that we should repeat behaviours that promote our health like the ones discussed today so that they become our habits. Most people do not acquire these good habits due to lack of information, poor planning and thoughtlessness rather than lack of money. State that most habits/measure to remain hygienic and clean either do not cost anything or cost very little. Reiterate that it is worth spending a little on the basic necessities like soap, toothpaste, tooth brush, nail cutter etc. to remain clean and hygienic. Explain that the “brand” of soap is NOT important. As long as it performs the function of cleaning the skin without harming it in any fashion, it is alright. Remind them that they need to wash their entire body including the private parts.

Key Messages:
Highlight and repeat the following to the class:
- Personal hygiene is important to maintain our body and preserve it.
- We must keep every part of our body clean.
- We all need to develop good habits to maintain hygiene and promote our health.
- It does not cost much to remain hygienic.

Ideas for Learning More:
- Ask the students to talk to their mother/father/elder sister/cousin about what they learnt today. Find out if their younger siblings were aware of all these things.
- You have observed that the waiter at the snack shop is wearing dirty clothes and serves you with dirty hands. What steps will you take?
HYGIENE

Hygiene is more than just being clean. It is defined as the many practices that help people be and stay healthy. Practicing good personal hygiene is smart for two reasons. - First, it helps prevent people from catching and spreading illness and disease., and Second, it helps people feel good about themselves and their bodies. Hygiene refers to the steps one takes to keep clean and healthy. Students need to be told the important facts about hygiene as given below.

“You are a very important person and you are responsible for keeping yourself special and healthy. Hygiene is what keeps and promotes the health of people and the community. There are clean living habits everyone should try to follow. Let us learn the importance of cleanliness.”

We can save ourselves from many infectious diseases like typhoid, Cholera, non-specific diarrheas etc by washing our hands after visiting the toilet and before taking our meals. Diarrhoea causes the death of one child every 30 seconds globally. However the risk of diarrhoeal infection can be reduced by 47 per cent by the simple process of washing hands with soap. Some simple habits like good dental hygiene and changing underclothes daily help us remain clean and healthy in the long term too. Good grooming is also an indicator of personality.

As can be seen from the Table below, Infectious and parasitic diseases are an important cause of death among children and young people in India, especially females. The Table shows that 13.9% of girls in the age group of 15-24 die because of infectious and parasitic diseases. These can considerably be reduced by following hygienic measures / habits. Habits developed in childhood are likely to have great beneficial effect. It is never too early or too late to start practicing habits of good personal hygiene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of death among children and young people, 1999</th>
<th>INDIA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Major causes</td>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>Age groups</td>
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<td>5-14</td>
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<td>Infectious and parasitic diseases</td>
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<td>Diseases of blood and blood-forming organs</td>
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<td>Mental and behavioural disorders</td>
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<td>Diseases of central nervous system</td>
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<td>Pregnancy and childbirth</td>
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<td>Injury, poisoning and other consequences of external causes</td>
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(YUVA Help Line No. 1800116888)
Hygienic Habits: - Most habits are just what the word “habit” means – “regularly repeated behaviour pattern”. By regularly repeating the behaviours they turn into “habits”. Thus we should repeat behaviours that promote our health. Most people do not acquire these good habits out of poor planning and thoughtlessness rather than lack of money. Most habits/measures to remain hygienic and clean either do not cost anything or cost very little. It is worth spending a little on basic necessities like soap, toothpaste, tooth brush, nail cutter etc. to remain clean and hygienic. Children also influence each other. They discuss what new issues they encounter, and collectively play and experiment with ideas that strike them as unusual. When a child has become strongly convinced of an idea - especially an idea such as the frequent washing of hands - the idea becomes translated into a life-long habit. All of the above produce long-term changes in society.

Taking good care of one's teeth is one of the smartest investments a person can make in their health, helping to ensure that the teeth will remain strong, healthy, and white for a lifetime. Dental hygiene is made up of rinsing your mouth frequently, brushing your teeth with toothpaste at least two times each day, trying not to eat too many sweets that will rot your teeth and seeing your dentist for regular check-ups. Avoid smoking or chewing tobacco, which can stain your teeth, give you bad breath and cause cancer. If you have any problems with your teeth or gums, you should see a dentist as soon as possible. Taking good care of your mouth and teeth will help you to have pleasant breath, a nice smile and fewer cavities.

Dental hygiene is only one part of what makes up good personal hygiene. Other good living habits are:

- getting a good night's sleep (sleep hygiene)
• eating a **good breakfast** (don't skip breakfast because it gives you the energy you need to make it through to lunch)

![Image of breakfast]

• **washing** your hands frequently to avoid spreading germs. Many diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid etc are caused due to germs present on dirty hands. Students should ensure that their hands are clean, especially before eating any food. Everyone must wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before having meal.

**When should you wash your hands?**

- After using the toilet
- Handling raw food (before and after)
- Touching the hair, face, or body
- Sneezing or coughing
- Smoking, eating or drinking
- Handling chemicals
- Taking out garbage or trash
- Clearing Tables
- Touching clothing or aprons Touching un-sanitized equipment, work surfaces, or wash cloths

Taking a **bath** daily to keep the dirt and odors away.
Taking a bath or shower means washing your body—including the back of the neck, underarms, feet—with soap and washing your hair with shampoo. Remember to wash your body all over, including the private parts. How often you take a bath or shower will depend on your activities. If you take part in activities that get you dirty or make you sweaty, then you will need to get clean more often than someone who does not take part in such activities. A good rule to follow is to take at least one bath or shower each day no matter what and then if you get dirty and smelly while playing, you will need to get clean after your activities.

The “brand” of soap is NOT important. As long as it performs the function of cleaning up the skin without harming it in any fashion, it is fine to be used.

- **“Good Grooming”** - having well washed neat hair, combing the hair neatly, clipping nails, clean face and hands, wearing neat clothes, wearing proper and clean socks and shoes,
- **Care of the feet** - keeping the nails trim, keeping feet dry, wearing clean socks—preferably made of cotton, wearing comfortable shoes. These measures will help keep the feet clean, safe from fungal and other infections and prevent worm infestation too.
- **Care of the nails**: Nails should always be kept clean and neatly trimmed or filed. Dirt and bacteria can get trapped in nails that aren't clean. As with the hands, nails are a way for bacteria to be passed from person to person. Preventing the spread of bacteria prevents the spread of illness and infection. Nails that are excessively long can, by virtue of their length, hold more dirt than shorter nails. Those with longer nails, then, need to be more diligent about keeping their nails clean.

Getting plenty of **exercise** by walking, playing, riding your bike (don't forget to exercise your brain by reading and doing your school work too!)
Eating healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables with very little spice etc.

Taking care of the nose and ears:
- Avoid picking the nose. Clean the nose while having a bath.
- Avoid cleaning and blowing the nose in public places.
- Do not insert anything in the ears
- Do not put any oil or other liquids into the ears.

Taking care of Hair:
Taking care of hair is very important. Many children may have lice and these many spread to other children and even adults if not treated. Gently talk to the parents and advise them on simple measures to remove lice such as washing the hair with neem or special shampoos in the market. They should use the special comb available for this purpose. Guide the students to maintain clean hair.

Many adolescents have myths and misconceptions regarding personal hygiene including that of their “private parts”. These may contribute to their ill health in many ways –especially predisposing girls Infections and their attendant complications. Poor hygiene may also lead to Urinary Tract Infections (UTI). Maintaining cleanliness of the private parts will also help reduce the chances of acquiring skin infections, and UTI especially in girls. Adolescents need appropriate information and skills to maintain personal hygiene. This not only protects their present health but also protects them in future and is likely to reduce death rates including the Maternal Mortality Rate in the country. Both girls and boys need to be aware and practice hygienic measures to promote personal hygiene.

How can girls and boys maintain personal hygiene?
It is extremely important to maintain hygiene of all parts of the body to avoid infection.
- Bathe at least once a day, paying special attention to face, underarms, and private parts so that they remain clean all the time.
- Girls should take precaution to wash their private parts *from front to the back* to avoid infection of these parts.
- Change the underwear daily. The underclothes should ideally be made of cotton.
- Wash undergarments after using for one day and dry it properly in the sun.

Good Habits during adolescence benefit the adolescents during their adulthood and others too:
The habits picked up in the childhood and adolescence have a long term impact on their health as adults too. It is obvious that improper oral hygiene during adolescence may lead to loss of teeth or gum problems that in turn will lead to poor digestion. Poor hygiene in girls may contribute to repeated Urinary Tract Infections with their complications that are reflected in adulthood. The habits developed during this period are carried throughout life and impact health during adulthood in other ways too.

When adolescents follow the rules of good personal hygiene, they not only help themselves, but also help others –including adults! How? By keeping clean, the students are not spreading germs to others and are not making them sick. Thus the cycle of transmission of diseases causing organisms is broken by utilizing such simple measures. This is a sensible, and cost effective way of promoting public health.
UNICEF launches `hand washing campaign'
Staff Reporter
NEW DELHI: Diarrhoea causes the death of one child every 30 seconds globally. However the risk of diarrhoeal infection can be reduced by 47 per cent by the simple process of washing your hands with soap.
Water Aid India in collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Wednesday launched a nation-wide campaign to promote hand washing with special emphasis on school children. The launch of the campaign marks the 14th United Nations World Water Day celebrations. The launch of the `hand washing campaign' saw the participation of school children, parents, teachers, Panchayati Raj institutions and members of NGO's. Also present were various experts from the water and sanitation sector, government officials, UNICEF representatives and international NGO leaders. As a build up to World Water Day, a letter-writing competition on the theme "One way in which I can prevent children from getting water-borne diseases" among school children had also been organised. At the campaign launch event, former cricketer Kapil Dev, presented certificates to winners of the letter writing competition.

Keeping India's Hands Clean
By Kaushiki Rao
On March 22, to commemorate World Water Day 2006, New Delhi-based NGO Water Aid India, which works to enable poor communities to access adequate, safe water, formally launched a Hand washing Campaign. The campaign is an initiative to spread awareness about sanitation by convincing people of the importance of washing their hands with soap or ash as and when necessary.

Drawing from several health and sanitation studies conducted by the London School of Tropical Medicine, Water Aid has found that there is both the need and space for such an initiative. This research found that one of the biggest causes of child (under -five) mortality is diarrhoea, which is closely linked to clean water and sanitation. (According to UNICEF, the under-5 mortality rate for India in 2003 was 87 per 1,000 live births.) It has also found that frequent washing of drastically increases sanitation. Other, more informal research, conducted by Water Aid India has found that compared to other methods, washing hands is a cost-effective way of promoting sanitation.

The hand washing Campaign will focus on both rural and urban India, and is based on the use of mass media and those channels that reach a wide section of the public.
The hand washing campaign is unique in its three-pronged approach. First, it views and uses children as agents of change. Second, it hopes to affect people's behavior by addressing their desires rather than simply by providing them with information. Third, it works on a partnership framework - the community will be treated as a partner in mobilizing frequent hand washing. These three issues are the nodal points of how the campaign will be carried out.

How are children agents of change? According to Asha Ramesh, Director for Policy and Partnership at Water Aid India, "Children often affect adult behavior. What they learn at school, they talk about at home, and in this way generate interest and discussion amongst adults." Yet, even if they do not talk about what they learn, their very activities create interest among adults. Children also affect each other. They discuss what new issues they encounter, and collectively play and experiment with ideas that strike them as unusual. When a child has become strongly convinced of an idea - especially an idea such as the frequent washing of hands - the idea becomes translated into a life-long habit. All of the above produce long-term changes in society.

Children develop interest in an issue through gaining knowledge, through play, and through activities such as painting and drama. They also develop interest through knowing about or interacting with those they are likely to consider role models. Initiatives in other areas - such as Bal Panchayats in the area of governance - have been successful in using the above methods. The hand washing campaign hopes to reach children through all of these means.

The second prong of the campaign's approach - changing behavior through addressing desire - is inventive. The campaign creates local interest, especially among adults, through the intensive use of different communication techniques. It suggests that the best way to address problems of sanitation is not by dictating reason, but by working with people's existing motives and practices. Anand Shekar, Regional Manager for Water Aid India, says, "We believe that building on people's desires, rather than rational argument, is the best way to effect change in people's behavior."

Whatever the approach, the Hand washing Campaign is important. It will contribute significantly to the Millennium Development Goals, the Swajaldhara campaign (rural drinking water supply program based on community participation) and the Total Sanitation Campaign. Most importantly, it will improve standards of living, and reduce incidence of disease and child mortality. This campaign is a simple, yet essential, step in achieving clean and safe living environments.