

## Living Well with Dementia

### Caregiver Tips on Bathing & Personal Hygiene



#### What could be causing this behavior?

- An individual's needs for support will depend on the type and extent of the brain damaged caused by dementia. In the early stages of dementia, the individual will be able to help care for themselves. However, as the disease progresses, they require more assistance and support.
- The steps associated with bathing, dressing and personal hygiene can be overwhelming for the individual living with dementia. Determine ways in which steps can be simplified to reduce anxiety and confusion.
- Bathing and hygiene are typically a private activity. The individual with dementia may feel like they're giving up some of their independence by having someone help them with their hygiene activities.
- It's common for an individual living with dementia to become depressed or apathetic. This may result in a loss of desire to maintain their hygiene.

An individual who is living with dementia may become anxious about bathing or having someone help them with their personal hygiene. Anxiety can stem from concerns about falling, not knowing which faucet controls hot or cold water or feeling vulnerable during a private activity if they receive help from someone.

#### How You Can Help

- **Provide privacy during certain activities** such as washing and dressing if the individual is capable of completing this activity safely on their own.
- **Create a routine for bathing and hygiene** that is easy for the individual with dementia to follow.
- **Break down tasks** to make bathing and hygiene an easier task for the individual with dementia.
- **Create a safe environment** for the person living with dementia to feel safe. Using items such as a non-slip mat, bath tub seat and removing dangerous items such as razors may help them feel more comfortable completing the activity.

**For more information about caregiver tips or program availability through Living Well with Dementia, please contact Easterseals Homemakers & Health Services at 603.335.1770.**