



## **The Bathing Process and its role in optimizing patient care**

By Steve Salomon, RN, MBA

Bathing is an essential part of the total patient assessment and is a critical component in overall skin health by cleansing the body while aiding in the exfoliating process. Bathing is the first step in skin protection and improving skin hydration, which is the key to helping build up the skin's resistance to ulceration, trauma and infection. It is a common goal for each individual to maintain the highest functional level of activity possible while still maintaining their dignity and at the same time accomplishing the task at hand – bathing.

The **Tranquility Cleansing Wipes Whole Body Bath** is a water-free bathing system consisting of eight (8) pre-packaged disposable cloths that contain both cleanser and moisturizer. One cloth is used for each body area in a specific sequence, from neck and facial area to buttocks and perineal areas. The wipes are available in packs of 16, giving two full baths per package, and can be warmed in the microwave for added comfort. This type of bath saves time and reduces the need for additional linens and supplies. The Tranquility Cleansing Wipes Whole Body Bath is ideal for bed-bound patients and for those with sensory impairment, such as dementia, for whom tub or shower bathing may be traumatic.

A patient's condition will determine the most *appropriate* type of bathing modality to be used. We refer to this as "Appropriate Bathing". Some individuals may require a bed bath while others may require a lesser level of assistance. Still others may be able to shower or tub bathe on their own or they also may require some assistance.

The three types of bathing under the "Appropriate Bathing" concept are:

- Shower/ tub
- Basin/ partial
- Bed bathing

The concept of "Appropriate Bathing" incorporates:

- Using only high quality, clinically products
- Providing each patient with the appropriate bath at the appropriate time
- Selecting the most appropriate and cost effective product for each bathing occasion.

Product choice should be determined by considering three factors:

- Activity level
- Mental status
- Skin Health

The steps to follow when considering what the "Appropriate Bathing" solution should include:

- Understand the person's abilities allowing them to do as much as possible but be ready to step in when needed.
- Preparation of the bathing area making sure the room temperature is adequate and all needed supplies are in place or readily available.
- Ensure that the person is the focal point of the bathing experience, not the task itself.
- Maintain a level of flexibility and understanding reassuring the patient as they are guided through the process always protecting the person's dignity, privacy and comfort level.