

### Shaving the pubic hair

It is obligatory that impurities are completely removed before prayer; therefore, removal of the pubic hair makes it easier to maintain cleanliness. The hair may be removed by whatever method is safest and easiest for each individual. The hair that grows around the pubic area is usually very course and thick and after using the toilet, traces of faeces and urine may be trapped between the strands of hair or on the skin.

Muslims are encouraged to keep their genital area and underwear as clean as possible. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised the believers to use their left hand to clean themselves thoroughly after using the toilet. If one fails to clean this area properly, the body becomes a breeding ground for diseases including urinary tract infections.

### Circumcision

Circumcision has been encouraged for males. Circumcision makes it easier to keep the private parts clean from traces of urine, dirt, or impurities and it only involves trimming off the foreskin covering the glans.

### Trimming the moustache

The moustache should be trimmed so that the hair does not hang over the lip or get into the mouth as this may pollute the morsel of food that enters the mouth. It is important that the area around the mouth is kept clean so that it does not emit a bad smell.

### The hair of the armpit

Any hair removal method is permissible for the hair of the armpit. Removing the hair from the armpits makes it easier to clean an area of the body where sweat and grime collect. Hair, combined with darkness and moisture is an ideal place for bacteria to grow.

### Cutting the nails

Again, the main reason for keeping the nails short is for cleanliness and hygiene. Dirt, grime, and bacteria can easily be trapped under the nails and passed on to other people, especially when preparing food or in a medical environment. Having dirty or long finger and toe nails, is unhealthy and unhygienic.

Personal hygiene is important in Islam. In order to worship the Almighty correctly, it is necessary to strive to be healthy in both mind and body. Physical cleanliness is important just as spiritual cleanliness is important. Islam has provided clear guidelines for both types of cleanliness.

**For more information on Islam, or to obtain more pamphlets like this one, please contact Hope & Help.**



## HYGIENE IN ISLAM

**What does Islam say about hygiene?**

**Why is cleanliness so important to Muslims?**

**What does good hygiene mean to Muslims?**



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## Islam and Cleanliness go hand-in-hand

Muslims throughout the world have extremely high standards of personal hygiene, because Islam places great emphasis on both physical and spiritual cleanliness and purification. While humankind in general usually considers cleanliness to be a pleasing attribute, Islam insists on it. Muslims are required to take care of their personal hygiene by assuring that they are always clean and that their bodies, clothing, and surroundings are clean. The Quran declares, "Truly, the Almighty loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and He loves those who purify themselves." (Quran 2:222)

The Messenger of the Almighty, may the mercy and blessings of the Almighty be upon him, informed his companions, about the importance of cleanliness when he said, "Cleanliness is half of faith."

Personal hygiene is desirable at all times but certain aspects of personal hygiene are not only important but also compulsory.

In Islam, it is obligatory for a person to wash himself in the toilet after relieving himself. This dispenses with the need for toilet paper. However, it is permissible to use toilet paper after washing oneself. Merely using toilet paper is not enough. Without washing in the toilet, no prayer is acceptable. Most Muslim homes have taps installed next to the toilet or have water jugs available to facilitate cleanliness.

Islam even teaches that one should sit in a

squatting position to relieve oneself. This prevents urine from splashing onto the body and clothes. An added benefit of sitting in a squatting position is that pressure is applied to the stomach, thereby easing the way for the removal of faeces. Muslims don't stand and urinate or urinate in public. After exiting the toilet, one has to wash one's hands thoroughly to remove all traces of impurities.

Islamic teachings emphasize the washing of hands before and after meals. Similarly, if a person drinks milk before going to bed, he should wash his mouth thoroughly. Only now science is

**"CLEANLINESS IS HALF OF FAITH"**

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

discovering the benefits of these actions which Muslims have been carrying out for hundreds of years.

Cleanliness is of three kinds: 1. purification, or the ritual washing in order to perform prayer; 2. keeping the body, clothing, and environment clean; and 3. specifically removing the dirt or grime that collects in the various parts of the body, such as the teeth, nose, under the nails, in the armpits and around the pubic area.

### Ritual Washing

Purity is the key to prayer. One has to be free from filth, both spiritual and physical. Islam has ordered believers to pray five times daily. Ac-

cordingly, they have to wash themselves several times during the day and night just for the sake of prayer.

During the ablution, one has to wash one's mouth, hands, face and feet. Ablution rids the body of minor impurities, and a full bath cleanses the body of major impurities. A full bath must be taken after conjugal relations or any such activity that releases bodily fluids. A full bath is also performed at the completion of a woman's menstrual period or post natal bleeding.

Islam is a holistic religion that takes into account mankind's need for a balance between physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being. Personal hygiene and cleanliness, both physical and spiritual, keep both the body and mind free from disease. Cleanliness is an important part of the high standards and values that are inherent in Islam.

Some actions in Islam are according to the natural way – the way that is pleasing to the Almighty and beneficial to humankind. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of the Almighty be upon him, include advice about: shaving the pubic hair and the hair of the armpit, circumcision, trimming the moustache, and clipping the nails. This is the natural way followed by all of the Messengers, may the mercy and blessings of the Almighty be upon them. Let us examine each of these actions in relation to cleanliness and personal hygiene.