

# Some of Your Bits Ain't Nice !

## Notes for users

### Introduction

The Majority of request for film on personal hygiene received by the HEC in the period leading up to the making of 'Some of Your Bits Ain't Nice!' came from teachers who were covering personal hygiene as part of a syllabus, and from supervisors and personnel managers wishing to include personal hygiene in a teaching program for their staff. 'Some of Your Bits Ain't Nice!' was made in response to this demand, and a cartoon format chosen in order to appeal to both adults and young people.

### Aims

To convey the basic principles of good personal hygiene to individuals in schools, at work, and in the community, and to stimulate informal discussion on an otherwise sensitive and difficult topic.

### Objectives

That the viewer should understand:

- (a) The cause of body odour, and the importance of regular washing of body and clothes.
- (b) The importance of clean and well-maintained hands, particularly where the preparation and eating of food is concerned.
- (c) That poor oral hygiene can lead to bad breath, while regular tooth brushing and dental visits, good nutrition and absence of smoking are all aids to good oral hygiene.
- (d) That regular grooming and washing of the hair helps to minimise the incidence of grease and dandruff.
- (e) The importance of washing ones feet and socks regularly, and wearing shoes which fit well.

### Target Audience

This film would be suitable for young people (13+) in part of full-time education, youth groups etc. And for adults at work or in the community.

### Synopsis

The cartoon opens Mike Roscope, the penetrating private eye who hates dirt, telling us about a recent case of his involving two young people at a disco. We see Buster and Isla warming up on the dance floor, where they discover to their horror that 'Some of Their Bits Ain't Nice!'. As each in turn rushes off to clean up the offending 'bit', Mike Roscope tells us about how and why we should keep our hands and nails, teeth, body, clothes and feet clean and fresh.

## Notes on the film and suggestions for use

Prestests with different groups of young people showed that while some of the information in the film was well-known to the respondents and indeed practised by them (e.g. regular all-over washing and changing of clothes), other details (e.g. the brushing-time required to ensure the removal of plaque from teeth) caused genuine surprise. The following questionnaire has been designed to establish where knowledge about personal hygiene is either lacking or incorrect. Column A should be completed **before** the film is shown and Column B **afterwards**. It is the answers in Column B which will form the basis of any subsequent discussion.

Please note:

This aim of the questionnaire is for each individual to discover for him/herself where there is room for change in his/her personal habits. It should be made quite clear that no-one will be asked to publicly reveal information details about themselves, and that the information is solely for the benefit of the individual. The questionnaire will not be collected in. Everyone can therefore afford to be honest!

If you wish to use the questionnaire with your audience, the following page can be photocopied and distributed before the film so that Column A can be filled in.

If the main reason for showing the film is to encourage the audience to look at ways for helping colleagues/employees/pupils etc. Who have personal hygiene problems, you may wish to ignore the questionnaire and detailed questions on the film, and turn straight to the section of these notes entitled 'Further discussion/role-play'.

## Personal Hygiene Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for your eyes only. It will **NOT** be collected in, so please answer the questions truthfully.

You will be asked to complete Column A before you see the film, and Column B after you have seen the film. Column A is about your habits now, Column B is about the suggestions for good personal hygiene contained in the film.

You may be asked to talk about Column B after the film.

	Column A Do You	Column B Should you	
1. When			Take particular care to wash your hands?
2. How often			Wash your hair?
3. How often			Wash your hairbrush?
4. How long			Spend brushing teeth each time?
5. How often			Buy a new toothbrush?
6. How often			Visit the dentist?
7. How often			Have a proper bath or shower?
8. How often			Change your underwear?
9. How often			Wash your feet?
10. How often			Change your socks?
11. Do you know someone who has a personal hygiene problem?			



If you answered 'yes' to the last question, who do you think should tell them?  
How would you tell them?

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As the target audience for 'Some of Your Bits Ain't Nice' is very wide, not all the points for discussion will be relevant to your group. Please select those questions which are suitable, and add your own wherever possible.

### Section 1: Hands

As well as washing ones hands and scrubbing ones nails whenever they look or feel dirty, the film recommends taking particular care to wash ones hands after going to the toilet, and before eating or preparing food. If those bacteria or viruses which are on our hands and which are harmful to us come into contact with the food we eat, we risk stomach upsets, sickness, diarrhoea and more severe forms of food poisoning. This section of the film is therefore particularly relevant to hotel and catering staff, or to anyone involved in handling and preparing food on a large scale.

In pretests, many young people were concerned by the possible link between dirty hands and spots. If this topic arises with your group, it may be worth pointing out that if you have a clear complexion, touching your face with dirty hands is unlikely to lead to spots, but if the skin is broken or already infected, touching spots or picking at them with dirty hands is likely to make matters worse.

### Points for discussion

- Do you notice people's hands? What about when you meet someone for the first time?
- Why is it so important to wash your hands after going to the toilet and before eating or preparing food?
- Which groups of workers are affected by legislation concerning the personal cleanliness of hands etc? Would it be a) desirable b) practical to extend this legislation?



## Sections 2 and 3 : Hair

The film recommends washing your hair every few days. Greasy hair picks up dirt easily, so it needs to be washed at least once a week using a mild shampoo and rinsed in clean, warm water. Some people may want to wash their hair more often so that it looks clean and shiny, but washing hair every day can make it greasier.

Dandruff is a common condition caused by dead skin cells clumping together in greasy flakes. The best way to control it is to keep the scalp free of excess grease by using ordinary shampoo, or medicated shampoo if this helps. If the dandruff is very bad, your doctor may be able to provide a more effective remedy.

If the head itches badly, it may be due to head lice. The eggs (or nits) are shiny and firmly attached to the hair, and can be seen on close inspection by the naked eye. Treatment is usually a lotion which kills the lice and nits in a few easy application. Anyone who thinks they may have head lice should ask a chemist, health visitor, school nurse, local health clinic or doctor for advice and suitable treatment.

The reminder to wash hairbrush and comb when washing ones hair was a point which all pretest groups found helpful.

### Points for discussion

- Hairdressers are likely to advise you not to wash your hair every day, and not to perm or dye your hair too often. Would you always accept their advice, or are there times when you put fashion and appearance before any possible damage you might be doing to your hair ?
- Would you know a) if you or a friend/colleague has head-lice ? b) how to get rid of lice if you find you do have them?

## Sections 4, 5 and 6: Teeth

Plaque is a substance containing harmful bacteria which collects on ones teeth. If it is left to build up it can irritate the gums causing inflammation and bleeding. Gum inflammation can be avoided by cleaning the teeth at least once a day using a toothbrush with a small head, and by taking time to clean the teeth properly, including the back teeth. Tooth decay is caused by sugar combining with the bacteria in the plaque, while bad breath can be caused by a number of factors such as poor teeth and gums, smoking, eating spicy foods, a heavy cold or chest infection, and digestive and other illnesses.

The Section of the film dealing with teeth starts by stressing the fact that poor oral hygiene leads to bad breath. It then goes on to make a number of recommendations based on the facts given above. It advocates brushing teeth regularly and for 'a number of minutes' ( the electronic timer in the corner of the screen actually clocks up 4' 10"). It suggests cutting down on sugar between meals, visiting the dentist regularly ( at least once a year is advisable) and replacing worn toothbrushes. Smoking is also mentioned as another aspect of poor oral hygiene.

Points for discussion

- Why do people have bad breath ? Is it just because they do not brush their teeth regularly ?
- Would you be prepared to tell your friend, husband/wife, boss etc. that they had bad breath ? How would you feel if they told you that your breath smell ?
- When is it helpful to be told that you have bad breath ?
- Does everyone in the group know how to find a dentist if they are not already registered with one ? Do they know what dental treatment they are entitled to under the N.H.S. ?
- Why do so many people put off going to the dentist until they have toothache ? How can people be helped to overcome their fear of the dentist ?
- Why does the film recommend cutting down on sugar intake between meals ?

What simple ways are there of doing this ?

- Make a list of sugar-free snacks which people could eat between meals without harming their teeth.
- Which foods contain a lot of hidden sugar ?

Sections 7 and 8: Overall Cleanliness

Particular areas of concern are the armpits and genital area ( or crotch). When people get hot or excited, they sweat. This is the body's way of maintaining itself at the right temperature. Underarms are likely to sweat quite heavily, and when that happens, bacteria grow. Washing under ones arms everyday will help stop the bacteria from growing and get rid of the smell of the stale sweat. A good wash with soap and water is usually enough to keep one sweet-smelling, but after washing some people like to use an anti-perspirant (to help reduce sweating) or a deodorant (to help reduce the smell of sweat.)

A daily wash, bath or shower is the best way to keep the genital area clean. It is a good idea to change underwear every day, and if one wears natural rather than man-made fibres next to the skin (i.e. cotton rather than nylon knickers or pants) is may help one to feel less sweaty.

### Points for discussion

- Imagine that someone in your group (class, office etc.) smells. Should anyone tell them ? (they may not realise that they smell.)
- If you answered 'yes' to the last question, who do you think should tell them? How would you tell them ?

### Group activity

'Brainstorm' with your group all the reasons people might give for not having a bath or shower every day (i.e. they have to share a bathroom with several other people, they are elderly or disabled, they have no time, hot water is expensive etc.) It may help to jot down contributions on a board so that you can refer to them. Accept all suggestions, including humorous ones. Then ask the group if they think any of the reasons given are valid excuses for not washing regularly. If the answer is 'yes', discuss how a person giving that particular reason for not keeping clean could be helped to overcome their difficulties.

### Sections 9 and 10: Feet

Damp, sweaty feet smell bad and can also develop skin infections like athlete's foot. To keep feet fresh and healthy, they should be washed every day and dried thoroughly afterwards, particularly between the toes. Socks or tights should be changed every day, and if possible socks made from wool, cotton, or mixed fibres like cotton/acrylic should be worn, as man-made fibres do not allow feet to 'breathe' so easily and may make them sweat more. Well-fitting shoes or boots are also important.

### Points for discussion

- Someone you know is quite sensitive about the fact that their feet smell. What positive advice could you give them ?
- Do you have any pairs of shoes (or boots) which seem to make your feet sweat more than usual ?  
What sort of shoes are they ? What are they made of ?
- Do you think it is possible to buy shoes which are both fashionable and comfortable ?
- If not, which is more important to you – shoes which look good with the clothes you wear, or shoes which are comfortable to wear ?

## Further discussion/roleplay

Discuss with your group why it is so difficult to tell someone that they smell. You might like to explore the following areas:

### Language.

What words should you use ? Are technical terms any less embarrassing i.e. 'You've got halitosis' rather than 'You've got breath'? How many people actually feel comfortable talking intimate parts of the body? (think of the euphemisms we have for various bodily functions.)

### Your relationship with that person.

Are they older than you, or in a more responsible position ? Do you know them very well, or only have occasional contact with them? Does knowing someone very well make personal hygiene easier to talk about? Are there some people who cannot talk to anyone about this kind of thing? Should they be left alone even if they have a personal hygiene problem?

### Social and cultural norms and values.

Why is open, non-medical discussion of personal hygiene so difficult when other sensitive topics (such as nudity, sexuality etc.) are discussed with increasing frequency? Why does society accept advertising for certain products, but not for others (for instance toilet rolls can be advertised on television, while sanitary protection for women can not). How many times do words like 'dirt' or 'smell' appear in advertisements for deodorants?

In pairs or threes (with one observer) roleplay a conversation between – either two colleagues at work or two friends or a husband and wife or a boyfriend and girlfriend or a manager and an employee or two classmates etc.

In each case one of you has a personal hygiene problem (dandruff, bad breath, B.O., smelly feet etc.) and the other person has to talk to you about it.

This roleplay could be followed by a discussion of how the 'smelly' person felt, and how it felt to be the person who had to talk to them. Was any approach and tone of voice felt to be particularly successful?