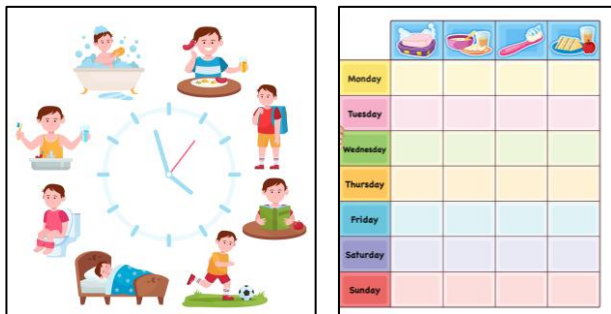


# Staying Clean and Healthy

Many teenagers with 22q11.2DS have learning difficulties or mental health challenges, making it difficult for them to take care of themselves. Nevertheless, **being clean and healthy can improve their well-being and self-confidence**. Here are some tips for parents or caregivers to help in 4 areas: personal hygiene, health eating, active lifestyle, and mental health.

## Personal Hygiene

Include personal hygiene tasks in the person's **daily routine**. Set up **reminders** using simple text or pictures.



Set up **“kits”** by using 1 container to keep all the tools for each hygiene task. For example:

### Dental



### Shaving



### Shower or Bath



### Hair care



For more info on hygiene kits, see pages 5 to 7 of **Healthy Bodies – A Parent’s Guide on Puberty for [Girls | Boys] with Disabilities**

## Healthy Eating



Serve **healthy, home-cooked meals**:

- 1/2 plate = **vegetables**, at least 2 colours
- 1/4 plate = **protein** (meat, fish, beans, lentils, or tofu)
- 1/4 plate = **starch** (brown rice, whole wheat pasta, or potatoes)



Make **healthy snack combos**. Each combo should contain **1 protein + 1 high fiber item**.

- Hummus + carrot/celery
- Low fat cheese + apple
- Low fat milk + high fibre cereal

**Avoid drinks with high calories.**

• **Drink plenty of water.**

- 14-18 year-old: 8 cups a day for girls and 10 cups a day for boys
- Adults: 9 cups a day for women and 12 cups a day for men
- 1 cup = 250 ml = 8.5 oz

• **Avoid colas and alcohols.**

They decrease the body's calcium levels. Many people with 22q11.2DS already have low calcium levels, which can lead to seizures.



Get more **calcium** from:

- Low fat milk or cheese
- Plant-based drinks with added calcium
- Dark green vegetables
- Some types of tofu



For more info on healthy eating, see [A Guide to Healthy Eating and Lifestyle for Adults with 22q11.2DS](#).

## Staying Clean and Healthy (continued)

### Active Lifestyle

**Caution: Ask your healthcare provider which exercises are SAFE for you.**

This is especially true for people with 22q11.2DS who have:

- Seizures and epilepsy
- Heart issues
- Issues in their bones (especially the spine)
- Issues in their muscles



- Include physical activities when planning the person's **schedule**.
- Start with 10 minutes of physical activities a day.
- Increase to 20 to 25 minutes every day.
- Exercise before gaming.



- Try a variety of activities.
- Include ones that strengthen muscles and bones 2 times per week



- Do activities with family or friends. Have fun together.



### Mental Health

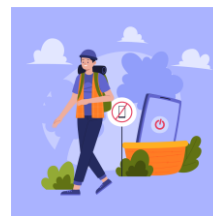
Eat well, sleep well, and stay active to promote mental health.



Limit alcohol and caffeine. Avoid drugs, including [cannabis](#).



Spend less time on screens. Instead, **spend more time on face-to-face interactions, free play, and exploration.**



Record **changes in emotions, thinking, behavior, and functioning**. Tell your healthcare provider, as these may indicate that you are struggling with your mental health.



### References / Resources

- [The Healthy Bodies Toolkit for Girls](#) | [The Healthy Bodies Toolkit for Boys](#) – Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, USA
- [A Guide to Healthy Eating and Lifestyle for Adults with 22q11.2DS](#) | [How to Help Manage Anxiety](#) – Dalglish Family 22q Clinic, Canada
- [Cannabis](#) | [Screen Use](#) – [Caring for Kids \(Preteens & Teens\)](#), Canadian Pediatric Society
- [What Parents Can Do For Their Children](#) – Mental Health Series, [Health Conditions Explained](#), International 22q11.2 Foundation
- Graphics: [magnific.com](#), [emojipedia.org](#), [clipartmax.com](#), [stickpng.com](#) and [Canada's Food Guide](#)