In Regards to Hygiene

Body Odor! – Did you know that when a person reaches puberty, he or she may begin to sweat differently? The human body has eccrine & apocrine sweat glands. The eccrine glands produce clear, odorless sweat & have been active since childhood. They’re located all over the body to help control body temp, eliminate water, salt & other waste products by releasing perspiration through pores. At puberty, the apocrine glands (located primarily under the arms & in the genital area) become active. Emotions like tensions, nervousness, & excitement stimulate these glands to produce a milky-looking perspiration, causing body odor when it comes into contact w/ bacteria on the skin.

As a teenager, how do I fight body odor? – Bathe daily w/ soap & water (be sure to scrub between your toes). If you have a problem w/ dry scalp (dandruff) & are using a 2-in-1 shampoo-conditioner, try switching to using a shampoo & conditioner that are in separate bottles. Just wash & rinse your hair w/ the shampoo 1st & then w/ the conditioner. If you have dry skin (especially during the winter time), then apply body lotion once you’ve dried off after bathing. Use an anti-perspirant, which is more effective than deodorant (this just covers up smell). Anti-perspirant reduces wetness before it starts (try putting it on at night so that it can sink into your sweat glands & be more effective). Change sweaty clothes (body odors can be held in dirty clothes...even if the skin is clean). Always put on clean clothes after bathing, especially undergarments. Wear cotton undergarments, which allow the skin to “breathe” compared to nylon which traps moisture in its fibers.

Acne Myths: Acne does not seem to be caused by the types of food you eat, such as chocolate, nuts or fried foods, unless 1 has a food allergy. A balanced diet, rich in fruits, vegetables is important for overall health. Acne isn’t caused by hair (bangs) on the face although it’s a good idea to keep hair washed frequently, if it’s oily.

Acne! – Most young people will at times have problems w/ acne during puberty. Acne is a disorder of the skin’s oil glands (sebaceous glands) that results in clogged pores & outbreaks of lesions called pimples or zits. They usually occur on the face, neck, back, chest, & shoulders.
**Why is Acne so common among teens?** It has to do with the secretion of hormones during puberty. The same hormones that cause a body to grow & change also cause the development of the sebaceous glands. These glands secrete oil or sebum, which is why they’re sometimes called oil glands. During puberty, these glands become very active. These oil glands are usually connected to a hair follicle. Normally the sebum or oil reaches the skin & flows freely. But if the pathway becomes blocked, oil has nowhere to go & acne is the result. These pathways aren’t blocked by dirt or oil on the surface. Cells that are shed from the hair follicles inside the skin are the troublemakers. A person can wash & scrub his or her face 100x a day & it wouldn’t affect whether he or she gets acne or not. However, washing your face does get rid of excess oil & helps to keep the skin clean.

**Other Causes of Acne:** Acne can be aggravated by oily creams & lotions that may clog pores. Pressure on the skin by wearing tight collars, headbands, caps or resting the chin on one’s hands can exacerbate the problem. Also, picking, touching, & squeezing blemishes can spread the oil under the skin causing reddening & inflammation as well as spreading bacteria from 1 pimple to other places on the face.

**Treatments:** There are a variety of treatments for acne, dependent on the type of acne & its severity. First, it’s important to wash with a mild soap & warm water twice a day. Don’t use harsh soaps, astringents, & scrubs as they may dry or irritate the face & actually encourage more oil production. Many teens have problems in what is called the T-Zone: forehead, nose & chin. Mild soaps include Aveeno bar (made of oatmeal), Dove, & Neutrogena. Acne meds that contain benzoyl peroxide can be effective in clearing up or preventing some acne conditions. These meds work by penetrating deep into the follicles to prevent the pathways from being blocked. It may take awhile for the effects to be seen. Antibiotics may also be prescribed. For acne that doesn’t respond to the above, Accutane, a Vitamin A derivative may be prescribed. It has very positive effects although a person using it will have blood work checked during the time he or she is on the med since it can raise cholesterol & affect some liver enzymes as well as cause easy bleeding of nose, dry lips & skin. Finally, eat a healthy diet & exercise regularly. Exercise stimulates blood circulation & may help the complexion.