Personal Hygiene — study guide

On a ship, one person's poor hygiene becomes everyone's problem — especially where food is handled. This guide covers hand and body hygiene, cabin care and the bacteria that matter.[1]

What personal hygiene is

Personal hygiene is the steps that we all take, every day, to keep ourselves clean and healthy. There are over **500** different species of bacteria that live in and on the human body. Poor standards of hygiene — such as not washing your hands — spread dirt and bacteria to everything we touch, including the food we eat.

Hand hygiene

Wash your hands for **20 seconds**. If you need to cough or sneeze, always cover your mouth and nose with a **tissue** (or the crook of your arm), dispose of used tissues immediately, and wash (or sanitise) your hands right away. Washing hands regularly is one of the simplest actions that protects everyone on board.

Cabin and body care

To keep your cabin clean and tidy: keep surfaces clear and clean, stow shoes and clothes away, and launder clothes and bed linens regularly. Also shower and wash your hair regularly, brush your teeth **at least twice a day**, wear clean clothes and use the laundry services, and dispose of waste correctly.

Wounds

Clean and cover all wounds — this reduces the risk of infection and the transfer of bacteria. Treatment should be sought immediately for even minor injuries, cuts, rashes and abrasions.

Harmful bacteria

Potentially harmful bacteria include **E. coli**, **Staphylococcus aureus** and **Salmonella**.

Key facts to remember

- Personal hygiene = daily steps to stay clean and healthy; >500 bacterial species live on the human body.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds. Cough/sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your arm; bin it and wash hands at once.
- Cabin: clear/clean surfaces, stow clothes and shoes, launder regularly.
- Brush teeth at least twice a day; shower, wash hair, wear clean clothes.
- Clean and cover wounds; seek treatment immediately for minor cuts, rashes and abrasions.

© 2026 maritimetest.com · free study guide

- Harmful bacteria: E. coli, Staphylococcus aureus, Salmonella.

Sources

1. Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (as amended) — health protection and hygiene on board, including food and catering provisions.