

Sensory considerations for washing hands



March 2020 has shown rise to COVID-19 which is a respiratory illness, which means it affects the parts of your body you use to breathe: your nose, throat and lungs. If you're sick with novel coronavirus (COVID-19), your symptoms might include:

* fever, * a cough, * sore throat, *fatigue, *shortness of breath

One way we can help to prevent this is by washing our hands. When we cough or sneeze these droplets can pass on the virus. If we don't wash our hands this can then be passed on through touching other surfaces etc.

"For me, if I touch water, so if I go to wash my hands or take a bath it feels like it's raining needles on my hands... and then I quickly take my hands out of the water as fast as I can, when I dry them off with a towel it feels like I'm rubbing my hands on sandpaper.

So I have needles in my hands, then sandpaper with that feeling of grain on my hands it's twice as bad so I go to grab an ice pack because it feels like my hands are on fire, the ice is water and so starts the cycle again!"

Jaydy11

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Workshops, exhibitions and installations to create awareness of sensory processing difficulties.

Sensory difficulties

We know some people with Sensory Processing Difficulties will find it difficult to wash their hands. Here I am going to explain what some of these aspects might be and why.

Some general things to consider are using timers, either a visual timer, a music timer or song or a vibrating alert. This will help to prompt when to wash hands and/or how long to wash for.

Tactile

Some people may find the tactile feeling of the water or soap on their skin overwhelming. This can be a hyper-sensitivity to certain textures or feeling substances on their skin. Other ways you might notice it is if they don't like getting messy.

Try using a wet towel with soap soaked in to wipe hands on or dry soap that dissolves in their hands.

Smell

The scent of soaps can overwhelm.

Try using unperfumed soaps or have familiar smells around which can help to over ride / comfort.

Visual

The visual complexity of the bubbles in the soap may be too much for some people with hypersensitivities. Or the reflective bright surfaces in a bathroom can be painful.

Try a soap that doesn't make bubbles like a gel or paper soap. You can try wearing sunglasses or hats to reduce glare as well as wash your hands in different environments.



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