



### Bottom wiping

Many children with coordination difficulties have difficulty with learning how to wipe themselves. This is because this is a complex task which needs balance, core stability, co-ordination, proprioception and sensation.

#### Hints and tips for wiping independently:

Practice at the weekends and during holidays when there is more time.

- Sensation is important - are they aware that they are dirty and need to wipe? You could help develop these skills with games such as: In the bath, play games such as putting shaving foam "blobs" at different places on the child's back for them to wipe off.
- Try using wet-wipes instead of toilet paper, as these can help with cleansing and are often easier to wipe. (Wet wipes cannot be used with a septic tank)
- Give the child a small packet of wet-wipes to go to school. Teach the child to wipe 5 times and check - they may not be able to feel when they are clean so it may help to have a specific number of times to wipe.
- Does the child understand the concept of wiping? Try practicing with something they can see in front of them. E.g. Wiping peanut butter or chocolate sauce off a plate.
- Look at how the child does the wiping task – are they struggling to balance? If they sit on the toilet to wipe, think about having feet supported as this will help with stability. If they are really struggling with balance, then a rail on the wall might be helpful.
- Does the child know where to reach to wipe? They could practice taking a blob of blu tack from underneath their chair, or taking sellotape off the outside of their underwear while wearing it.
- Does the child know when they are clean? They could use a hand mirror to check.
- Practice the movement needed for bottom wiping. For example, passing a ball or balloon around the body when standing or sitting; or playing tunnel ball where a ball is rolled between the legs.
- If the child cannot remember the sequence of actions to be done, provide a visual reminder of these for him or her to follow [www.do2learn.com](http://www.do2learn.com).
- There are books available to help the child become more aware of the social side of bottom wiping.
- Encourage the child to go to the toilet regularly after meals to encourage a regular bowel habit.
- Is the child experiencing sensory difficulties? Are they repelled by the smell or the texture of the toilet paper or wipes? Are there ways to change the things that bother them most?
- Is the child fearful of getting their hands dirty? They could try using disposable gloves while wiping. Although be aware that sensation is decreased while wearing gloves. Also some children may have a latex allergy.
- If the child has soiled his/her pants and he/she is older, encourage putting the soiled pants in the washing machine and washing them. Try to praise effort even if they are still making some mistakes.