SHAVING FOR YOUNG MEN

For many boys, shaving is one of those coming of age activities. It signifies growing up and becoming a man. Yet boys with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may not relish the changes that come with puberty, particularly ones that so drastically affect their appearance. Furthermore, shaving can be difficult for young men with ASD due to sensory issues and/or fine motor skills. Below are some tips to help with this milestone.

- Identify when it is time to shave. Use photos or pictures to show facial hair growth and what it looks like when it is “time to shave.”
- Have your son watch an experienced shaver many, many times.
- Consider using a Social Story™. Illustrate the story with photos of the steps to complete a shave. Include the steps to get familiar with the products used (see below).
- Begin with an electric shaver. This is generally easier for most beginning shavers.
  - Be sure to spend some time getting used to the sound and the vibration by turning the shaver on and off and holding it against the hand and/or arm before trying it on the face.
  - Teach your son how to safely clean the electric shaver and how to dispose of the hair.
- If a non-electric razor is preferred, a wide-handled shaver may be easier to grasp.
  - Allow the individual to select the shaving cream and choose the scent and texture.
  - There are disposable razors for men with built in shaving cream and a lubrication strip, but these can be hard to find and tend to be relatively expensive.
  - Have plenty of supplies on hand.
  - Teach your son how often to change the blade or razor.
- Address safety issues. Remind your son that a razor is sharp and can cause injury if not used appropriately.

- Be sure to be explicit about what parts of the body your son is to shave. If your son needs to remove hair from other parts of the body (for example, eye brows or back hair), consider using wax or a body hair removal cream. Note: wax may be too hot for your son and hair removal creams have strong odor and unusual consistency, which may make them difficult to tolerate.

- If your son has nicks or small cuts on his face, have him learn to use a styptic pencil and/or steri strip to control the bleeding and to avoid any infection. (Make sure you address this likelihood before it occurs, for example, in your Social Story™.)

Related Articles:

- Teaching Your Child Hygiene and Grooming Skills
- Male Puberty: From Physical Changes to Masturbation
- Hair Care for Males
- Shaving for Young Women
- Adolescence

Additional Resources:

- Face Shaving Tips
- How to Shave with an Electric Razor