

## THE ROLE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE AND EFFECTIVE HOME MANAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Personal hygiene is the principle of maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the body. It entails the way an individual cares for the body from head to toe to help preserve and protect the body from infections and to promote good health. Generally, hygiene is one of the silent victories of public health since it refers to practices whereby people maintain and promote good health by keeping themselves, their homes and surroundings clean. Proper home management must be practiced alongside personal hygiene in order to maintain a healthy and happy family. Home management is the art of utilizing all the resources which are available in the family to achieve healthy living and wellbeing. The woman is basically the home manager. This paper is introduced and discussed under subheadings like personal hygiene, issues on personal hygiene, importance of personal hygiene, types of personal hygiene, home management, process of home management, general steps in home management, etc. It is recommended among others that children should be taught personal hygiene and home management early in life so that as they grow up, they continue with the practices, to help them maintain good health and personal wellbeing, and become responsible members of the family and society.*

**KEY WORDS: Personal Hygiene, Home Management**

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### INTRODUCTION

The word “personal” means a single person or individual, or a particular person rather than a group of people. World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) referred to hygiene as conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases. Personal hygiene is therefore the way an individual cares for the body from his head to his toes, to preserve the body, promote good health, and protect the body from infections. Johnson (2017) described personal hygiene as the principle of maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the external body. Johnson noted that people have been aware of the importance of hygiene for thousands of years. For example, the ancient Greeks spent many hours bathing, using fragrances and make-up in an effort to beautify themselves and be presentable before others.

Personal hygiene is the basic concept of cleaning, meaning that hygiene begins with oneself. It is the first step to good health. Besides that it is considered as one of the most important parts of our daily life at home, community and workplace which helps to protect and keep people in good health. Generally, hygiene is one of the silent victories of public health since it refers to conditions or practices by which people maintain or promote good health by keeping themselves, their homes and surroundings clean (Allello, Larson & Sedlak, 2008). This means that in maintaining personal hygiene, the home must also be managed and kept clean to help reduce routine exposures to pathogenic microorganisms in order to have a healthy and happy family. This reduction in pathogen exposure results in dramatic reductions in infectious diseases, illness and premature death (Allello, et al. 2008).

Home management encompasses the activities carried out to preserve, protect, promote, improve and maintain one's home and its systems. It is a vital and important factor in every family contributing to the overall health, happiness and wellbeing of the family. Devdas (2016) referred to home management as the act of making the best use of what you have to get what you want; that is utilizing all the resources, both human and non-human, that are available in the family, to achieve healthy living and wellbeing of the family.

### **Personal Hygiene**

Personal hygiene is one of the most effective ways to protect oneself and others from many illnesses and health hazards. Good personal hygiene is essential to promoting good health. Proper grooming and healthy personal habits can help a person ward off illnesses, and practicing good personal hygiene helps an individual feel good about himself, which is important for good mental health (Orenstein, 2009). Boehlke (2014) noted that having good personal hygiene practice means taking care of oneself and leading a healthy lifestyle, which includes cleaning all areas of the body on a daily or regular basis to prevent odors and keep up one's appearance.

Lynn (2014) wrote that taking care of one's body through good personal hygiene not only helps the individual to present an outwardly groomed appearance, it is also good for one's health. Across the world, hygiene habits have a direct correlation to illness and survival; throughout the day, a person's body comes into contact with dirt and bacteria and if hygiene practices are incorporated in the day's activities, the body will be kept healthy and clean. Davis (2015) emphasized that good hygiene was an important part of helping an individual feel confident about one's body and self. This author noted that if a person has poor personal hygiene, the individual will have problems with not only his appearance but also his health.

### **Issues in Personal Hygiene**

Poor personal hygiene or failure to maintain a standard of hygiene can have many implications. Not only is there an increased risk of contracting infections, but there are many social and psychological aspects that can be affected. Johnson (2017) discussed the following as implications to personal hygiene:

- i. **Social issues:** Many people hate negative comments about them. Hence by ensuring that the body is clean and well presented, a person is more assured of projecting a positive body image that reflects the personality. Poor personal hygiene gives rise to

- social embarrassment since people would rather alienate themselves from someone who has bad personal hygiene than to tell the person how to improve.
- ii. **Psychological issues:** By being well presented, clean and tidy people can feel more confident, especially in social situations, chances of succeeding either in work or social settings. Even relationships with the opposite sex can improve by maintaining good hygiene. Poor personal hygiene affects how an individual or others perceive self and can negatively influence the level of confidence and self esteem, which may affect many aspects of life.
  - iii. **Health issues:** Poor hygiene can lead to a poor health status, a great deal of illness and even death, to self or others around.
  - iv. **Body image issues:** Body image influences self esteem, confidence and motivation. Those who already have low self esteem, especially those with depression often neglect personal hygiene, which perpetuates the problem of body image. Physical appearance is the ultimate factor by which to judge and be judged, hence there are three things to always remember:
    - a. If one follows the basic principles of personal hygiene, the person can and will look good to most people.
    - b. One's action and behaviour are very important to most people; and
    - c. Good hygiene practices will help keep one healthy, give self confidence and be pleasant to those around.

### Importance of Personal Hygiene

1. **Health implications:** Skipping any hygiene practice even for a day or more can lead to higher risk of being a victim of different ailments. If the hands are not washed with soap after visiting the bathroom and one directly gets involved in food preparation, the person may expose others to various infectious diseases. Therefore, it is important to develop good personal hygiene since it is helpful in reducing the chances of falling sick.
2. **Attractiveness:** Personal attractiveness can be improved through good personal hygiene practices like brushing the teeth, taking regular showers and taking a head wash. Being clean as well as free from odor makes it easier for others to get acquainted with the person. Being cautious with one's hygiene requirements also makes one aware of his or her appearance.
3. **Consideration:** Being careless with the daily hygiene practices can lead to the accumulation of sweat and thus bacteria in different body parts. It therefore becomes really important to follow proper hygiene practices in the daily life to have a disease free life.
4. **Professional acceptance:** No organization in the world would like its employee to look unhygienic and untidy. Employees who are unable to maintain a hygienic presence carry poor self-image before their colleagues as well as the clients.
5. **Pleasant smile:** Proper oral hygiene is important to support a nice, attractive smile, reduces the risk of gum diseases, which are responsible for bad breath to a significant extent.
6. **Reduced health care costs:** Following good hygiene routinely reduces the occurrence of different diseases thus reducing the frequency of visits to the health centre or hospital, invariably reducing much spending on treatment.

7. **Self esteem:** Being clean and hygienic provides much better feeling about oneself as compared to the one used to being dirty. Also, a person gets more positive reactions to hygiene and clean appearance thus raising one's self esteem.
8. **Social acceptance:** Proper hygiene is a must for social acceptance since no one likes being around a dirty or unhygienic person who emits strong body odor.
9. **Setting examples:** It is the duty of parents to set examples for the children by following good hygiene routine. Children can easily be convinced through examples (actions) rather than what is said to them.

### **Types and areas to consider in personal hygiene**

Orenstein (2009), Lynn (2014) and Davis (2015) discussed the types and areas to consider in personal hygiene as follows:

- a. **The skin:** A healthy skin feels soft, smooth and when pinched gently feels thick, strong and elastic. The skin should be washed at least twice daily. But this may be increased depending on the person's type of work. Dirt blocks the pores of the skin. Washing with soap and water, warm or cold, will remove the dirt which consists of microorganisms and gives the body a fragrant smell. During bathing, special attention should be given to skin folds and where skin surfaces meet, e.g. the armpit, the groin, soles of the feet and, in women, under the breasts. After bathing, dry properly (especially the mentioned areas) and use cream and powder if desired. Using antiperspirants, deodorants and body sprays/perfumes could also help.
- b. **The hair:** The hair provides a good place for bacteria to grow, so proper care is essential. Wash the hair at least once a week with shampoo or toilet soap. It is advisable to keep the hair uncovered for fresh air to circulate and stimulate blood supply to the scalp and fresh air also keeps the hair odourless. Any type of hair one keeps should be neat and tidy. The brush and comb should be washed each time the hair is washed. Parents should teach their children how to use the brush and comb and should be discouraged from borrowing items such as brush, comb, cap and hat. Always go along with your brush, comb or clippers to the salon, to avoid contacting diseases especially HIV/AIDS. Always inspect your child's scalp to guard against common diseases like ringworm of the scalp. If present, take the child to the nearest clinic or hospital. Most people say and think that ringworm of the scalp has no cure. With proper treatment, it disappears within one week.
- c. **The eyes:** Have frequent examination of the eyes to test eye sight and any abnormality. Report any eye problem to the hospital. If the eyesight is defective, an ophthalmologist or optician should be consulted. Avoid very fine work like threading the needle always especially in the case of children. Use the eyes for fine work only in a good source of light. Sunlight is not a good source of light to work in because it is too bright. At night, good lighting is very necessary for reading or writing. Dust, dirt and smoke are common things that irritate the eyes. They should be avoided, but if they gain entry into the eyes, dirty fingers should not be used in rubbing the eyes. The lids can be washed with clean water or cleaned with clean wet cloth.
- d. **The nose:** Protect and prevent children from putting objects like chalk, beads, beans seed inside the nostrils. Teach them early enough to make them know what is dangerous. Picking the nostrils with the fingers is a bad habit. Use the handkerchief instead and cotton bud for children. Mucous should be blown out of the nose gently. Many people

make the mistake of tightly blocking the nose with the handkerchief before blowing. This may have the effect of blowing mucous sideways into the sinuses or into the middle ear causing inflammation of those parts. The handkerchief must be held loosely over the nose. Cover your mouth with hand or handkerchief when coughing or sneezing. Breathing should be done through the nose and not the mouth..

- e. **The ear:** Wash the pinna (outer ear) properly while bathing. Use cotton bud for removal of ear wax. Do not poke objects like broom stick, matches or biro pen cover into the ear, they may damage the ear. In case of any foreign object like beads in the ear, consult the hospital. Also consult the hospital for ear aches. Avoid the introduction of native herbs into the ear. Continual loud noise damages the inner ear. People with mobile phones should first of all press the button to stop the ringer melody while receiving calls before placing the phone over the ear, as prolonged exposure may damage the ear.
- f. **The teeth:** Clean your baby's gum, tongue and teeth with a piece of clean white cloth or gauze dipped in salt water. Brush the teeth and clean the mouth every morning, before going to bed, after each meal and each time you eat sweet things. Use toothpaste and brush or chewing stick to clean the teeth. Brush the teeth up and down and append at least three to five minutes when brushing and brush the tongue properly. Use toothpick or tooth floss to remove food particles from between the teeth after meals. Exercise the teeth by chewing hard food like tough meat, sugar cane and biscuit bone. When food is left between the teeth after meal it ferments and produces acid solution which causes bad breath and tooth decay. Report to the dentist any slight pain in the teeth or gum. Brushing or rinsing of the mouth should be done in the bathroom only. Spitting and coughing up mucus on to the ground is bad habit. These should be discharged on tissue paper or into the toilet to avoid the spread of infection. Food like liver, egg, butter, milk, fish, pumpkin leaves, oranges, pineapples, bones which are rich in vitamins A, C, & D, calcium and phosphorus help in the formation of good strong teeth. Recent research studies revealed that using toothpaste directly on the teeth may cause darkening of the teeth. It is advisable to dip the toothbrush in water to dilute the concentration of the toothpaste before use. Frequently change the toothbrush and always wash under running water after use.
- g. **The hands:** Frequent hand washing is necessary especially before eating, before and after using the toilet. Children should be taught this habit. The nails should be kept short so that dirt does not collect. Any cut or scratch should be well treated. Hand washing is the first line of defense in protecting oneself from the spread of illness from other people through personal contact or contaminated surfaces. Wash hands frequently, including after using the toilet, when making or eating food, after blowing the nose, after changing baby's diapers, and on getting back home. Wash hands by wetting them, then soaping the fingers, the back of the hands, around the nails and palms. Recommended duration for washing the hands is 20 seconds.
- h. **The feet:** The nails should be kept short and clean. It is a bad habit to go barefoot or allow children to do so. The danger is that one may step on a sharp object and get injured or contact infection like hookworm, which enters the body through the soles of the feet. There are many sweat glands in the feet. Wash and dry the feet often paying particular attention between the toes because the warm and moist atmosphere may encourage the development of fungal infection, and also to avoid soreness and offensive odours. Shoes, socks and stockings should be changed daily, used socks and stockings washed, and shoes aired. Avoid wearing shoes that are too tight, to guard against injury and deformity.

High heel shoes give strain to the legs. Do not wear them always. It may cause cramps and arthritis in the long run. Avoid prolonged standing or sitting in one position. That way, the feet become swollen and may ache. People who stand for longer periods due to the nature of their occupation should remember to exercise the feet from time to time. The exercise will help to keep the blood flowing and to avoid tiredness.

- i. **Maintenance of a healthy body:** To maintain a healthy body, there are certain activities that individuals should perform. Attention should be given to the body to enable all the functions to be carried out properly and structures responsible for these functions kept in good order.
  - a. **Exercise:** This is the systematic movement to strengthen and relax the muscles of the body. To enjoy good health, suitable regular exercise throughout life should be seen as part of personal hygiene. Whatever one does to make one sweat is a form of exercise. The baby exercises himself by kicking, crawling and sometimes crying. The toddlers do exercise by climbing, jumping and running. The older children should be encouraged to participate in school games. Apart from exercises done while doing household chores, the adult male and female, including father and mother, should get involved in exercises like playing tennis, throwing or playing football within the family. It is always advisable to at times leave one's car behind and go for short distance treks. Taking a walk and performing some household chores are also good for pregnant women. The benefits derived from such exercise are:
    - i. Muscle development and muscle tone is improved.
    - ii. Joints and bones become stronger and more easily moveable.
    - iii. Appetite is stimulated to provide food for combustion.
    - iv. Respiration is stimulated and quickened to get the oxygen needed for increased combustion and to get rid of excess carbon dioxide.
    - v. Movement of muscles quickens blood circulation which improves the general metabolism and this clears the organs of waste products, which are excreted by the kidneys and skin.
    - vi. Peristalsis is increased and constipation avoided, and
    - vii. The individual's mind is stimulated and becomes more alert (active).
  - b. **Posture:** This is the position or shape the body takes up, or the way the body holds itself. Good posture is important when sitting, standing, walking, lifting heavy objects or bending. Maintaining good posture contributes to good physical conditions. Children should be taught how to maintain good postures especially when they are walking or sitting. Good posture is desirable to support the body's weight and structures adequately, prevent stiffness and strain to muscles, prevent malformation, as well as promote and improve circulation and respiratory functions. By so doing, the body is less tired and performs more efficiently. Good posture represents positive attitudes; it promotes attractiveness, confidence and makes one more acceptable.
  - c. **Fresh air:** The body needs fresh air always. Fresh air moving over the hot skin evaporates sweat and cools the body in the hot weather. It refreshes the skin and stimulates circulation in the blood vessels of the skin. It ensures good ventilation of the lungs and helps to produce restful sleep.

- d. **Suitable clothing:** Clothing is worn to protect the body from changes in the weather and against injury, and to maintain the custom of covering the body. Clothing should not be too tight so that air and blood can circulate well in the body. The type of cloths worn at any time should not irritate the skin. Clothes form an envelope around the body which either allows sweat to evaporate and conduct the heat always, so enabling cooling to take place, or retains both heat and moisture so helping to keep the body warm. Clothes can do a great deal to enhance morale and confidence and contribute to the general sense of wellbeing (what type of clothes do you wear or allow your teenagers to wear?). The ability of clothes to fulfill these functions depend largely on the material of which they are made (choose materials according to weather conditions), the fitting and style of the garment (not too tight, not too short) and the ease with which they can be kept clean. For example, as many times that the children's clothes are dirty, change them, do not repeat your underwear and clothes to avoid body odour. It is advisable to use underwear made with cotton materials and not nylon (especially panties). Cotton materials readily absorb moisture, which in hot weather evaporates making the material cool to wear, and in cooler weather, the moisture does not evaporate and the material feels cool. Nylon materials do not absorb moisture. They generally attract heat. Warm and moist environment favours the breeding of microorganisms. So wearing nylon pants can cause itching and infection of the private parts. It can go as far as killing the cells in the testicles in males, therefore reducing their production capacity. It is also advisable to always wear white pants especially during pregnancy, so as to dictate when there is an abnormal discharge. Always dry the underwear (and other cloths) outside under the sun to help kill germs.

## Home Management

Home management is the process of properly maintaining a good home, property and overseeing property and necessary household activities for the wellbeing of the family. It implies the process of decision making and careful utilization of family resources to meet family needs and achieve goals (West African Examination Council 2012). It also means the process of preserving, protecting, maintaining and improving one's home and environment. A well managed home is more satisfying to live in. It fulfills the adage that "An ounce of prevention is Better than Loads of cure" (Word press, 2012). Home management is the most important career in the world. Women especially should know that whatever career or job they have should be part-time and home management is or should be their full-time career.

Much like operating a business, managing a home requires skills such as planning, organizing, budgeting and directing. A wife and mother should know that there are lots of aspects of life that will thrive under her care and attention like marriage, parenting, housework, finances, children's upbringing and education, as well as the family's social life. Fisher (2016) noted that successful home management is organizing all these areas in a way that fits individual family's needs and personalities, in a way that most blesses one's family and ultimately brings glory to God. A good home manager should have the qualities of a "Virtuous Woman" who willingly works with her hands and girds herself with strength (Proverbs 31:10-31, New King James Version).

## The process of Home Management

Home management depends upon various managerial processes, which involves four basis steps according to Your Article Library (2016)

- **Planning:** This is the most important step which enables the home manager to find out various ways of using available resources to achieve the desired goals. It consists of dividing\sharing and grouping of activities and assigning them to all members of the family.
- **Controlling:** For the successful implementation of the plan, a certain amount of control is essential, which involves careful observation of performance, making changes when things seem to be getting off course, and keeping every member satisfied, and
- **Evaluating:** This looks towards both the process of management and the results in order to judge the success and achievement of the plan of action. It forms the guidelines and basis for future planning. The home manager learns through experience about the effectiveness of a plan.

## General Steps in Home Management

There are many steps in home management. LaHaya and LaHaya (1995), Ajala (2006), Joseph (2011) and Fisher (2016) discussed the different steps as follows:

1. **Set Priorities:** This is listing different areas in the home in order of importance depending on the family type. Good home management appreciates and involves relationships first and foremost. People are more important than anything in the home. Love and security should exist among members. Listening to one another and cooperation should exist. Where there is love in the home, there is peace and tolerance, hence a happy and successful home.
2. **Home list:** One thing that helps a lot is to fill out an organizer that lists all the responsibilities as well as different things to do at each particular time. This helps to set one's mind to being efficient since it is seen on paper. Fisher (2016) wrote a similar plan, noting that when one has a list of responsibilities, no aspect of home management would be neglected or forgotten. In planning, the home manager needs to share responsibilities to every member of the family by way of establishing some routines and getting the family on board for all to work together to make the home life much enjoyable for everyone.
3. **Staying Organized:** Effective home management helps one to keep things organized around the home. The home environment should be kept tidy. Modest, unclustered homes take less time to clean. Everything should have its proper place for one to be able to keep track of household items and not rush a round looking for items all the time. Objects left lying around are potentially dangerous.
4. Many accidents in the home are due to careless and untidy habits. Rodents like rats that are carriers of Lassa virus are attracted to clustered and untidy environments.
5. **Maintaining Home Environment Hygiene:** A home management plan should include a schedule for routine maintenance and cleaning for inside and outside of the home. For the family to be healthy, the home environment should be kept clean and tidy. This is the responsibility of everybody living in it. Sweeping and washing the floors and walls often

prevents dirt, breeding of microorganisms and offensive odours. Remove cobwebs (high dusting) regularly, fill in cracks and holes in the floors or walls where cockroaches and other rodents can hide to cause health hazards. Dispose refuse properly. The home should be well ventilated to allow free flow of fresh air into the rooms. Poorly ventilated rooms encourages respiratory tract infections and cross infections. Cut grasses around the homes to prevent breeding of rodents like snakes, rats (they carry Lassa virus to man) and mosquitoes that carry malaria parasite. Joseph (2011) advised that the home manager could always employ a house cleaner to help do some of the cleaning, where there is limited time for home cleaning.

6. **Finances:** Home management also includes managing the home's finances sensibly. It is advisable to always prepare a monthly budget depending on one's income to help track of expenses so as to eliminate wasteful and unnecessary spending. The home manager should avoid living on deficit and borrowing. Family needs should be managed with whatever income the family has.
7. **Children's upbringing:** If there are children in the home, getting them involved in home management can be a good way to teach them the importance of handling responsibilities, so they might grow up to be responsible enough to manage their own households when the time comes. It will also help them to take care of their belongings when they leave home for boarding schools. Involving them in the budgeting process and encouraging them to find ways to help trim household expenses is also a good home training (Joseph, 2011). They are also taught to love and fear God, respect elders and every other person, wear decent cloths, have self value, as well as other good morals.
8. **Maintain Good Nutrition:** Good nutrition is a very important aspect of home management. To maintain good health, one needs to be aware of and have knowledge of foods and their values. Eating healthy food makes the body function properly. Eating the right quality of food at the right time and right quantity is of paramount importance as it helps to promote growth, mental and physical development as well as prevent diseases. It is important to note that an intelligent choice of food is the responsibility of the mother. The father only gives out money. So if the children are malnourished, the mother is held responsible.

The key to nutritious diet is to get adequate amounts of food from a variety of food groups known as the "Basic Four" These food groups are;

- Milk and milk products.
- Meat and meal alternatives.
- Fruits and vegetables, and
- Grains, that is bread-cereal group (Ajala, 2006)

These food groups will help the home manager to plan the family diet, so they must include food from each group and ensure the family is eating nutritious and well balanced diet on a daily basis. Some are cooked, while others are eaten raw. Vegetables should not be overcooked. Food supplies individuals with essential nutrients that the body needs for energy, for building and manufacturing body tissues. These are the ingredients that the body cannot produce but must get from the foods we eat. Hence, the family must eat healthily. The home manager should ensure that food is not contaminated by virus, bacteria, parasites or toxins. Foods should be well washed, cooked, covered and

preserved. Some of the methods of food preservation include refrigeration, salting, drying, smoking and keeping in air tight containers.

The home manager should ensure the practice of washing plates, utensils and generally cleaning the kitchen immediately after cooking and eating to keep flies and other rodents away and avoid bad odor emitting from the kitchen. The kitchen waste bin should have an air-tight lid, and should be properly disposed of at the public waste reservoir when it is full.

9. **Medical attention:** When a member of the family falls ill, it is the place of the home manager to insist on seeking proper medical care and if need be, access a health facility for adequate attention and treatment.
10. **Spiritual needs:** While the family certainly has a number of basic materials and physical needs, spiritual needs tied to faith in God is very necessary for the home manager to succeed in her home management. Those with deep faith in God have more reasons to love life. True faith is a source of strength and serenity that can help the home to deal with difficult times and have peace. The woman as the home manager brings God and His truth into daily home life. In marriage and where there are children, they and other members of the family are taught God's ways. The supreme hallmark of a spirit-controlled successful home and the key to an exciting family living is obedience to the word of God and prayers (LaHaya&LaHaye, 1995).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is best to note that personal hygiene is the first step to good health. It is important to care for the body from head to toe in order to preserve the body, promote health and protect the body from infections. Personal hygiene is part of home management. Every member of the family must be encouraged to practice good personal hygiene and home management. With the woman as the home manager, she teaches these practices to every member of the family to maintain the good health, happiness and wellbeing of the family and home.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made;

- Children should be taught the practice of personal hygiene and home management early so that as they grow up, they might continue with the practice, which will help them maintain good health and personal well being, and become responsible members of the family and society (Proverbs 22:6, New King James Version).
- Personal hygiene and home management should form part of the school curriculum.
- Every individual should learn to appreciate, love and value oneself. This will help in maintaining personal hygiene.
- Proper hand washing technique should be practiced to prevent contracting or transferring of infections to others,
- Schools should have periods for exercise and family members should encourage each others to exercise regularly in order to keep the body fit.
- Houses should be built with adequate ventilation to allow free flow of air in order to prevent cross infection.

- Each family diet should include food items from the four food groups to ensure that the family is eating right.
- To save lives, time and money, it is advisable to always access and utilize health facilities when necessary, and
- The family must always pray together for the home to be a healthy, happy and successful one.

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