

Soap

When you wash each day have you ever wondered where and when soap was first used?

On this page find some fascinating facts about soap.

The very first people did not have soap, but they would wash in the water of rivers and streams.

The ancient Egyptians bathed regularly to keep clean. They may have used oils on their skin and then scraped it off, bringing off dirt as well as the perfumed oils.

The use of some type of soap, though probably not soap as we know it today, is mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible. Do you know where? It would be interesting to look.

The name 'soap' possibly came from a Roman Legend telling of Mount Sapo, where animals were sacrificed. When it rained, a mixture of wood ashes and animal fat ran into the river Tiber. People washing their clothes in this water found their washing easier to do and much cleaner.

Early forms of soap were made from oils mixed with ashes from plants and some perfume to make it smell pleasant.

Bathing went out of fashion in Europe for many hundreds of years and crowded towns and cities must have been very smelly.

Soap making in England began in the 14th century. Soap was considered a luxury item and used only by the wealthy.

It was not until Victorian times that soap became widely used as people became more aware of the importance of keeping clean.

Nowadays we all use soap on a regular basis, either in the form of a bar or as a liquid that we squirt out of a bottle. What would we do without it?

