



Pre-Operative Bathing Instructions



Infection Prevention

Because skin is not sterile, we need to be sure that your skin is as free of germs as possible before your admission. You can reduce the number of germs on your skin and decrease the risk of surgical site infection by preparing your skin with a special soap called chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG). The instructions for use are attached.

What is CHG?

CHG is a chemical antiseptic that is effective on both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria. It is both bacteriocidal (kills) and bacteriostatic (stops reproductions) of any bacteria on the skin. CHG is in several products such as mouthwash, contact lens solution, wound wash, acne skin wash topical skin cleansers (chloraprep-what is used to clean your skin before an IV), thus we do not expect using this soap will cause skin irritation but please speak with your primary care physician to discuss any allergies. Studies show that repeated use of CHG soap enhances the ability of CHG to reduce bacterial counts on the skin; not only during the immediate period after the shower, but for a number of hours afterward. Studies suggest that patients may benefit from bathing or showering with CHG soap for **at least 3 days** before surgery in order to achieve the most benefit. It is unknown whether using CHG soap for less than or more than 3 days is beneficial. We recommend 3 days of treatment but understand this is not always possible and bathing the night before and the day of using CHG is acceptable. CHG soap can be purchased at any local pharmacy.

Should the whole body be bathed with the CHG soap or just the surgical site?

The CHG bath/shower prior to surgery should include **the whole body "from the neck down"** to avoid soap getting into the eyes, ears, nose, or mouth. Patients should also be reminded not to wash genital areas or scalp or hair with CHG solution. Genital areas can be washed with antibacterial soap if desired.

Getting Your Skin Ready for Surgery-Chlorhexidine Soap Shower

Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) 4% is a special chemical found in soaps such as Hibiclens and other brands. Everyone's skin has germs; this soap can reduce the number of germs on your skin. Follow these instructions to reduce your risk of infection.

Shower or bathe once a day for 3 days prior to surgery with a CHG 4% liquid soap:

Step 1: Wash your hair, face, and body, with your normal shampoo, conditioner and soap. Rinse completely.

Step 2: Turn off the shower or step out of the bathwater.

Step 3: Pour a quarter sized amount of liquid CHG soap onto a wet, clean washcloth and apply to your entire body from the neck down (DO NOT use CHG on face, hair or genital areas).

Step 4: Rub the soap filled washcloth over your entire body for 3 minutes – apply more soap as need (1/3 of the bottle should be used with each shower).

Step 5: Turn on the shower or return to the bath and rinse the liquid soap off your body.

Step 6: Towel dry

24 Hours before surgery:

- Do not apply lotions, powder, or deodorant to your body
- Do not shave or remove any body hair below the neck

If you are allergic to CHG or for any other reason washing with CHG is not possible, please follow the instructions attached and use antibacterial soap (such as Dial Unscented antibacterial soap).



General Instructions:

- 1) Read the "Drug Facts" information and directions on the bottle
 - a) CHG is not to be used on the head, face, or genital area
 - b) CHG should be kept away from the eyes, ears and mouth
 - c) CHG should not be used if you are allergic to any of the ingredients in the preparation
- 2) CHG 4% soap can be purchased at most large pharmacies.
- 3) Stop using the soap and call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction such as severe burning, itching, redness, blistering, peeling, swelling or rash.