

Getting Your Skin Ready for Surgery

You are scheduled to have surgery. To decrease your risk of infection, you will need to get your skin as free of germs as possible. You can reduce the number of germs on your skin by carefully washing with a special soap called **chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)** before surgery.

Follow These Instructions

- **You may be given or you will need to buy CHG soap.** You will need a 4-ounce (118-milliliter) bottle or larger. The soap is sold under the brand name **Hibiclens**, or there may be a store brand that costs less. Ask the pharmacist where to find it in the drug store. It is often with first aid supplies.
- **Do not shave the site** where your doctor will be making the cut for your surgery for **48 to 72 hours before surgery**.
- **You need to shower with CHG soap two times before your surgery:**
 - The day before your surgery
 - Again, the morning of your surgery

Cleaning Your Skin with CHG Soap

1. Start by washing your hair with your normal shampoo and wash your body with regular soap. Rinse your hair and body well to remove any shampoo or soap that might be on your skin.
2. Wet a clean washcloth and turn off the shower.
3. Put the CHG soap on the wet, clean washcloth.
4. Apply the CHG soap to your whole body from the **neck down only**. **Do not** use CHG soap on your face and be careful not to get it in your eyes, nose, mouth or ears. CHG soap does not lather well. Put more CHG soap on the washcloth as you cover more of your body. You should use about 2 ounces or ¼ cup (60 milliliters) of CHG soap with each shower.

5. Wash your body gently for **5 minutes**, paying special attention to the part of your body where the surgery will be done. Be sure to wash the back of your neck and under your arms. Wash your belly button, groin and legs down to your toes. **Do not scrub too hard.**
6. Turn the shower back on and rinse well to get the CHG soap off of your body. **Do not** wash with regular soap after you have used CHG soap.
7. Pat yourself dry with a clean, dry towel.
8. Do not use any powders, deodorants, lotions, make-up, hairspray or other products.
9. Put on clean clothes.

Be sure to take a second shower with CHG soap the morning of your surgery.

Special Notes

- **If you are to have a cut made into your scalp**, you need to wash your hair with CHG soap each time you shower. Wash your hair with regular shampoo and rinse it well with water. Put a large amount of the CHG soap into your palm and then work it through your hair and scalp. It will not lather like your shampoo. Be careful not to get CHG soap into your eyes, nose, mouth or ears. Rinse with clean water.
- **If you do not have a shower**, or you are not able to get into the shower, take a sponge bath. Do not wash your hair unless you are to have a cut into your scalp. First, bathe with a washcloth and regular soap. Rinse with clean water. Then get a clean washcloth, and use CHG soap to wash your body. Rinse with another clean washcloth and plain water. Dry with a clean towel.

If you have any questions about cleaning your skin, call your doctor's office.