

# 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 or foam.** You will need an 8-ounce (236 mL) bottle. 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 **one week before surgery**.
- **You need to shower with CHG soap or foam two times before your surgery:**
  - The night before your surgery
  - Again, the morning of your surgery
- **Use 4 ounces (½ cup or 118 mL) of CHG soap or 4 to 5 pumps of CHG foam each time you shower.**

## How to Shower with CHG Soap or Foam

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. Turn off the shower.
3. Apply some CHG soap or foam to the wet washcloth.
4. Use the washcloth to wash your whole body **from the neck down only**. Do not use CHG soap or foam on your face and be careful not to get it in your eyes, nose, mouth or ears.
  - CHG soap does not lather well.
  - **Keep adding more CHG to the washcloth and continue to wash for 5 minutes.** Use 4 ounces (½ cup or 118 mL) of CHG soap or 4 to 5 pumps of CHG foam each time you shower.
  - Pay 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.
5. Turn on the shower and rinse your whole body well. **Do not** wash with regular soap after you have used CHG soap or foam.
6. Pat yourself dry with a clean towel.
7. Put on clean clothes.

**Be sure to take a second shower with CHG soap or foam the morning of your surgery.** When you finish showering on the morning of surgery, **do not** use any powders, deodorants, lotions, make-up, hairspray or other products.

**If you are having surgery on your scalp:**

Your doctor may ask you to wash your hair with CHG soap or foam each time you shower. Wash your hair as marked:

- Wash your hair with CHG soap or foam each time you shower.** First, wash your hair with regular shampoo and rinse it well with water. Then, put a large amount of CHG into your palm and work it through your hair and scalp. It will not lather like shampoo. Keep the CHG soap or foam away from your eyes and ears. Rinse with clean water. If you get the CHG soap or foam in your eyes or ears, rinse them well.
- Do not wash your hair with CHG soap or foam each time you shower.** Shower and wash with the CHG soap or foam from the neck down only.

**If you are not able to shower:**

If you do not have a shower or you are not able to get into a shower, do a sponge bath each time to clean your body. Do not use CHG soap or foam on your hair unless you are told to do so by your doctor.

How to take a sponge bath:

1. First, bathe with a clean washcloth, water and regular soap. Rinse well with clean water.
2. Then, get a clean washcloth and wet it with clean water.
3. Apply some CHG soap or foam to the wet washcloth.
4. Use the washcloth to wash your whole body from the neck down. Keep adding more CHG and continue to wash for 5 minutes.
5. Rinse well with another clean washcloth and clean water.
6. Pat yourself dry with a clean towel.
7. Put on clean clothes.

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