

Showering Instructions Before Vascular Surgery

You can play an important role in your own health by following the instructions in this handout for showering before surgery. Because skin is not sterile, we need to be sure that your skin is as clean as possible.

How do I get the special soap needed for showering?

To clean your skin before surgery, your surgeon has asked that you shower with an antibacterial soap with chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) in it. The brand name is BactoShield® or Hibiclens®. You **do not** need a prescription to get this soap. You may receive a small bottle of the CHG soap or a scrub brush containing the CHG soap in the clinic.

If you are allergic to the CHG soap, do not use it. Tell your surgeon or nurse about your allergy and they will direct you to buy an antibacterial soap like Dial®, Lever® or Safeguard® (body wash or a new bar of soap).

What are my pre-op showering instructions?

Do's:

1. Shower with antibacterial soap the night before **and** the morning of your surgery. There is enough soap in the 4 oz. bottle to shower twice.
2. Wash your hair as usual with your normal shampoo during each shower or bath. **Do not** wash your hair with the special CHG soap.
3. Apply the CHG soap **only from the neck down**.
4. Use **gentle** friction with a washcloth or soft sponge to remove dirt.
5. Pay special attention to your neck, under arms, breasts, feet, groin, and skin fold regions.

6. Leave soap on your skin for 1-2 minutes to allow the soap to kill the bacteria. Rinse well after washing.
7. If your surgery **is on your backside**, use a long-handled brush, or have a family member wash your back.
8. Rinse well after washing with soap.
9. Gently towel dry your skin.
10. **Dress in clean** clothes and sleep with **clean linens** on the bed. Clean means laundered and dried and not used until the night before or day of surgery.
11. **Wear freshly** laundered, loose fitting clothes the day of your surgery.

Don'ts:

- Do not shave the area of your body where your surgery will be done.
- Do not wash your hair with the special CHG soap.
- Avoid getting the soap in your eyes, ears and mouth.
- Avoid rough scrubbing brushes and harsh scrubbing.
- Do not apply any deodorant, lotions, creams, powders, makeup or perfume to your clean skin.

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