

# Daily CHG Treatment

---

## What is daily CHG treatment?

During your hospital stay, we will clean your skin with antimicrobial (germ-killing) wipes if you are in the intensive care unit (ICU), on an oncology unit, or in general care with a central line. This cleanser is called **chlorhexidine gluconate, or CHG**. CHG kills germs on skin for up to 24 hours after it is applied. Our CHG cleanser comes in the form of prepackaged wipes that we will use once a day to help keep you from developing a bloodstream infection. Some hospital units may do extra CHG treatments as needed, as part of their unit protocol.



## What is a central line?

A **central line** is a tube that is placed into a large vein in your neck, chest, arm, or groin. This tube is used to give fluids or medications more effectively to the body than a regular IV (intravenous line). If this central line is not cared for, you can get a bloodstream infection when bacteria or other germs travel down the tube and enter the blood.

## How can I keep myself healthy with daily CHG treatment?

Keeping your skin clean and free of germs is one of the best ways to prevent infections while in the hospital. Your nurse or nurse assistant will help you with CHG treatment. Using CHG wipes daily while in the hospital has been shown to help prevent bloodstream infections. CHG can also protect you from getting an antibiotic-resistant bacteria such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

## **How are the CHG wipes used to treat my skin?**

CHG wipes kill germs and clean your skin. You may choose to take a bath or shower before your daily CHG treatment. We will use the CHG wipes on the outside of your body from the neck down (you will use regular soap and shampoo to clean your face and head). For most people, we use 6 wipes for each CHG treatment, and your nurse or nurse assistant will use each wipe on a different part of your body. We may use fewer wipes for children, depending on their weight.

## **What can I expect during my CHG treatment?**

- CHG wipes are warmed for your comfort before use, but CHG may feel cool on your skin as it dries. This feeling should go away once your skin is dry.
- Your skin may feel sticky after the CHG treatment. This sticky feeling is from the moisturizer in the wipes that prevents skin dryness. This feeling should go away once the skin is dry. The CHG left on the skin will continue to kill germs over time, so it is important not to rinse your skin off after being wiped with the CHG wipes.
- If you have concerns about itchiness or irritation from the CHG wipes, tell your nurse. They may give you a hospital-approved lotion to help with your symptoms in a way that will not affect your CHG treatment.

## **What can happen if I do not complete a daily CHG treatment?**

Germs try to find every passage into the body to cause an infection, including your central line. You can get a bloodstream infection when bacteria or other germs on your skin travel down the central line tube and enter the blood. A severe bloodstream infection can increase your hospital stay by up to 24 days and increase your chances of death by 35%. Simple things like completing a daily CHG treatment can help prevent this type of infection.

Together, we can prevent infections and speed your recovery by keeping your body and central line clean.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan (U-M) Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition, or your treatment plan.

Author: Jennifer Sweeney, MPH CIC  
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW CHES®

Patient Education by [U-M Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last revised 03/2025