

Showering Instructions Before Surgery

Before surgery, you can play an important role in your own health. Because skin is not sterile, we need to be sure that your skin is as clean as possible. Your skin will be prepared with antiseptic before your surgery, but the antiseptic can work better if your skin is **clean**.

To clean your skin before surgery, your surgeon has asked that you shower with an antibacterial soap like Dial[®], Lever[®], or Safeguard[®] (bars or body wash). Or your surgeon may have given you, or asked you to buy, an antiseptic soap with chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)* in it. If you are allergic to any of these products, you should not use them and tell your surgeon or nurse. Studies have shown it is not as important **what** antiseptic soap product you use, but that it is very important that you do shower or bathe before your surgery.

***For CHG soap:** You may be given a scrub brush containing CHG soap, or be given a small bottle of soap in the clinic. You **do not** need a prescription to get the soap. The brand name for this soap is Hibiclens[®] or BactoShield[®].

General Instructions

- For best results, you should shower **both** the evening before and day of your surgery.
- **Do not** shave the area of your body where the surgery will be done.
- With each shower or bath, wash your hair with your normal shampoo. Do not wash your hair with the CHG soap.
- Apply the CHG soap **only from the neck down**; other antiseptic soaps you may use as usual.

- Use **gentle** friction with a washcloth or soft sponge to remove dirt; however, rough scrub brushes and harsh scrubbing **should be avoided**.
- Special attention should be paid to your neck, under arms, breasts, feet, groin and skin fold regions. Rinse well after washing.
- If your surgery is on your back side - have a family member wash your back, or use a long-handled brush.
- Avoid getting any soap in your eyes, ears and mouth.
- Do not use lotion, cream, powder or perfume after washing.
- Wear clean clothes the day of your surgery.
- You may apply deodorant, unless instructed otherwise by your surgeon or nurse.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS 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. UMHS does not recommend unsupervised self-management of health issues.

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 6/27/2013