

Showering Instructions Before Surgery

Before surgery, you can play an important role in your own health by making sure that your skin is as clean as possible. We will prepare your skin with **antiseptic** (a substance that stops or slows down germ growth) before your surgery, but the antiseptic can work better if your skin is clean.

To clean your skin before surgery, your surgeon has asked you to shower with an antibacterial soap like Dial®, Lever®, or Safeguard® (this could be body wash or a new bar of soap). Your surgeon may also have given you or asked you to buy an antiseptic soap with **chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)**, a cleaning product that kills germs. If you are allergic to any of these products, do 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 shower or bathe before your surgery.

- If your surgeon instructed you to use CHG soap, we may give you a scrub brush containing CHG soap or 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®.

What are my instructions for showering before surgery?

- **For best results, shower both the evening before and day of your surgery.**
- Do not shave the area of your body where your 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.
- Only apply the CHG soap from the neck down.
- Use gentle pressure and light scrubbing with a washcloth or soft sponge to remove dirt. **Avoid using rough scrub brushes and harsh scrubbing.**

- Pay special attention to cleaning your neck, underarms, breasts, feet, groin, and skin fold areas.
- Before you rinse, leave the soap on your skin for 1-2 minutes to allow the soap time to kill the germs and bacteria. Rinse well after washing.
- If your surgery will be on the back side of your body, have a friend or family member wash your back or use a long-handled brush to make sure you clean the area well.
- Avoid getting any soap in your eyes, ears, and mouth.
- Do not use lotions, creams, powders, deodorants, or perfumes after washing.
- Wear clean clothes on the day of your surgery.

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