

Showering Before Surgery

Your surgeon has asked you to take two showers before surgery.

Why is this important?

It is normal for bacteria (germs) to be on your skin. The skin protects us from these germs. When you have surgery, we cut the skin. Sometimes germs get into the cuts and cause infection (illness caused by germs). By following the instructions below and using special soap, you will lower the number of germs on your skin. This decreases your chance of infection.

Special soap

Buy or get 8 ounces of antiseptic surgical soap called 4% CHG. Common name brands of this soap are **Hibiclens** and **Exidine**.

You can find it at your local pharmacy, clinic or retail store. If you have trouble, ask your pharmacist to help you find the right substitute.

A note about shaving:

Do not shave within 12 inches of your incision (surgical cut) area for at least 3 days before surgery. Shaving can make small cuts in the skin. This puts you at a higher risk of infection.

Items you will need for each shower:

- 1 newly washed towel
- 4 ounces of one of the above soaps
- Clean pajamas or clothes to change into

Follow these instructions:

Follow these steps the evening before surgery **and** the morning of surgery.

1. Wash your hair and body with your regular shampoo and soap. Make sure you rinse the shampoo and soap from your hair and body.
2. Using clean hands, apply about 2 ounces of soap gently on your skin from your ear lobes to your toes. Use on your groin area last. **Do not** use this soap on your face or head. If you get any soap in your eyes, ears or mouth, rinse right away.
3. Repeat step 2. It is very important to let the soap stay on your skin for at least 1 minute.
4. Rinse well and dry off using a clean towel.

If you feel any tingling, itching or other irritation, rinse right away. It is normal to feel some coolness on the skin after using the antiseptic soap. Your skin may feel a bit dry after the shower, but **do not** use any lotions, creams or moisturizers. Do not use hair spray or other products in your hair.

5. Dress in freshly washed clothes or pajamas. Use fresh pillowcases and sheets on your bed.

Repeat these steps the morning of surgery.

If you have any questions about showering or an allergy to CHG soap, please call your surgery center.