

Skin cleansing before surgery

The bacteria that are normally found on your skin can sometimes cause an infection in your incision after surgery. Here's how to lower your risk of having an infection in your incision.

- Use Chlorhexidine (CHG) soap to shower each evening for three days before the day of your surgery. If you are allergic to Chlorhexidine, you can use an antibacterial soap like Dial or Safeguard to shower.
 - Chlorhexidine soap will help remove bacteria that you cannot see on your skin that could enter your incision and cause an infection.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day for one week prior to your surgery. Bacteria live inside your mouth, too. Using an antiseptic mouthwash (Listerine is one example) also helps lower the amount of bacteria in your mouth.

What is Chlorhexidine Antimicrobial Skin Cleanser?

- It is a liquid soap that is stronger than regular soap.
- It is also called Hibiclens or Dyna-Hex.
- You can get it from your pharmacy or doctor's office when you schedule your procedure.
- **Do not wash your face or hair with this soap. Don't use it directly on your genitals.**

Each time you take a shower with the Chlorhexidine soap, please do the following:

You will need:

- Two freshly laundered washcloths
 - Antibacterial soap, like Dial or Safeguard
 - The bottle of Chlorhexidine soap
1. Using the first washcloth, wash your whole body in the shower with the antibacterial soap such as Dial or Safeguard. You may wash your hair with your normal shampoo. Rinse off and do not use that wash cloth again.
 2. Turn the water off or move away from the shower spray.
 3. Pour 1/3 of a 4 oz. bottle of Chlorhexidine soap onto the second clean, wet washcloth.
 4. Wash where you will be having surgery.
 5. Scrub in circular motions. Be sure to get in all skin folds.
 6. Then, wash the rest of your body, from your chin to your toes, ending with the groin area.
 7. Once you are finished, turn the shower back on, or move back under the spray and rinse the soap off your body completely.
 8. After your shower, pat yourself dry with a freshly washed towel. **DO NOT** use any powder, deodorants or lotions. Dress with freshly washed clothing or pajamas.
- Some common side effects of Chlorhexidine soap are itchiness, redness and irritation of the skin. These side effects usually go away quickly. However, if the skin irritation doesn't go away, or gets worse, call your doctor.

Do Not Use In Eyes, Ears or Mouth!

- If you develop a skin reaction, stop using immediately. If the reaction is severe (i.e., hives, blisters, swelling, or reactions do not go away quickly), call your doctor right away. If Chlorhexidine, Hibiclens or Dyna-Hex is accidentally swallowed, contact the Poison Control Center immediately **1-800-221-1222 (Central PA)**. Keep out of the reach of children.