

## PREOPERATIVE (BEFORE SURGERY) BATHING INSTRUCTIONS

To protect your health during your scheduled surgery, we need your skin to be as clean and germ-free as possible by carefully washing as instructed before surgery.

### Important

- You will need to shower with a special soap called **chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)** before your surgery.
- The soap comes in a liquid form.
- You must purchase it prior to your surgery at your local pharmacy.
- You do not need a prescription to purchase it at your pharmacy.
- Common names are: **Bioscrub or Hibiclens**
- Failure to prepare as instructed might lead to an increased risk for wound infection or your operation being postponed or cancelled.

### Bathing Instructions

- You will need to take three showers prior to your surgery
  - The first is two days (48 hours) before surgery.
  - The second is the day (24 hours) before surgery.
  - The third is the morning of your surgery.
- Remove all jewelry and body piercings.
- Clean your belly button well with a cotton swab.
- Wash your hair and face as usual with your normal soap/shampoo.
- Rinse your body thoroughly to remove any soap residue.
- Turn the water off.
- Apply CHG soap (Bioscrub/Hibiclens) liberally to your body with a clean washcloth/sponge.
- Wash your body gently for 5 minutes focusing on the area where surgery will be performed without rinsing the soap off.
- Also pay special attention to your neck, under arms, breasts, feet, groin and skin fold regions when washing.

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- Do not scrub your skin too hard.
- Leave the soap on your skin for 1-2 minutes to allow it to kill the bacteria.
- Turn the water back on and rinse thoroughly.
- Pat down with a clean towel after every wash and dress in clean clothing.
- Use clean sheets/bedding for 24 hours before surgery

### **Please Do Not**

- Do not wash your hair and face with the CHG soap
- Do not shave the limb and surgical area before surgery as this can increase your risk of infection. Any new cuts/abrasions or rash may lead to a delay or even cancellation of your surgery.
- Do not wash with normal soap after washing with CHG soap.
- Do not apply any lotions/creams/deodorants/powders/perfume on your skin after showering on the day of surgery.

### **Why do I have to wash with CHG?**

- Your skin is not sterile, so you will need to clean your skin well before your surgery.
- This will help reduce your risk for wound infections and complications during your hospital stay and after your surgery.
- The antiseptic used in theatre to prepare your skin for surgery will also work better if your skin is well prepared and clean.
- Your surgical team will make sure that your surgery is done under sterile (germ-free) conditions.

### **Side Effects**

- CHG is very safe and you do not need a prescription for it.
- Some people do get a mild rash, but this usually goes away without any treatment.
- Do not use CHG near your eyes, ears or mouth.
- If you are allergic to the CHG soap please use any alternative antibacterial soap that you prefer and follow the bathing instructions as above.

*If you have questions or concerns about showering, bathing or cleaning your skin before your surgery, please contact our practice nurse right away.*

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