

Methodist Health System

Bathing Before Surgery

All people have germs (or harmful bacteria) on their skin. To help prevent infection, your doctor wants you to bathe with a special soap that has chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) in it.

Use the CHG soap to wash your body the **night before and the morning of** your procedure. Examples of product brands containing CHG are DynaHex®, Betasept®, and Hibiclens®.

Bathing with CHG:

- Wet your body and hair with warm water. Shampoo your hair with your own shampoo.
- Only if you are having head and neck surgery should you shampoo your hair with CHG.
- Wash the rest of your body with one half of the bottle of CHG. Pay special attention to the part(s) where incision(s) will be made.
- Completely rinse the CHG off your body.

Points to remember:

- Do not use CHG if you are allergic to it or have sensitivity to it. Allergic-type reactions that have occurred with CHG include itching, redness and irritation. If you have an allergic reaction, stop the use of CHG and phone your doctor. Phone 911 if you have a severe, life threatening reaction.
- If possible, take a CHG shower instead of a tub bath. Showering gets rid of more germs than a tub bath. Wash all of your body, not just the area where the incision(s) will be.
- CHG does not lather like regular body soap.
- Do not get CHG in your ears, eyes, nose or mouth. If you do, rinse with lots of water.
- Do not use the CHG to wash your private parts.
- Have someone wash any parts of your body that you cannot reach.
- Do not shave any body hair in the planned surgical area. Razors nick the skin and allow your skin bacteria to enter the tissue which may cause infections after your surgery.
- CHG continues to kill the germs even after you rinse with water.
- Do not put any other lotions, powders, etc. on your skin. These items may prevent CHG from killing the germs.
- After showering with CHG, wear clean pajamas to bed and sleep on freshly laundered sheets the night before surgery.
- Do not let your pets sleep with you the night before surgery.

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