

# Preoperative Showering Instructions

Before surgery, it is important that you take an active role in your surgical care to assist in the prevention of surgical site infection. Because skin is not sterile, we need to be sure that your skin is as clean as possible. Your skin will be prepared with antiseptic before your surgery, but the antiseptic can work better if your skin is clean. We ask that you follow these instructions to prepare your skin to be as germ free as possible.

To cleanse your skin prior to surgery, your surgeon has asked that you shower with the antibacterial soap agent called **chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)**. Common names for this soap are Hibiclens®, Betasept® or Exidine®, but any brand with **four percent chlorhexidine gluconate** is acceptable. If you have a known allergy to this agent, you should not use this soap, and inform your surgeon or nurse. In this instance, you should use Dial™ or Safeguard™ soap. Ideally CHG is superior to Dial™ soap in removing germs from the skin. Dial™ DOES NOT contain the active ingredient CHG. CHG has a long-lasting effect of six hours, where Dial™ soap does not. You can purchase **chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)** in a four- or eight-ounce bottle at your local pharmacy or a UPMC Susquehanna pharmacy; it must contain four percent CHG.

## 1. Read the “drug facts” information and directions on the bottle:

- CHG is not to be used on the head, face, eyes, ears, or mouth.
- CHG is not to be used in the genital area.
- CHG should not be used if you are allergic to chlorhexidine gluconate or any other ingredients are this preparation.

## 2. Wash daily for the three days prior to surgery with CHG, following the instructions below:

Scrubbing before surgery can play an important part in your health and reduce the risk of infection. Your skin is not sterile. You can reduce the number of germs on your skin by carefully washing before surgery.

- 1) Wash and rinse your face and hair first using your normal shampoo.
- 2) Make sure you completely rinse your body and hair.
- 3) Wet your entire body.
- 4) Turn the water off in the shower or move away from the water spray to avoid rinsing the antiseptic soap solution off.

- 5) Apply the antiseptic CHG soap solution to your body starting at the neck and work downward. Wash your genital area with Dial™ antibacterial soap.
- 6) Never use the antiseptic solution near your eyes, ears, or mouth.
- 7) Gently wash your body.
- 8) Gently scrub the areas where the incision(s) will be located for about three minutes.
- 9) Once you have completed the scrub, rinse the CHG soap off your body completely using shower water.
- 10) **Do not** wash with regular soap after you have used the antiseptic CHG soap solution.
- 11) **Do not** shave any areas where surgery will be performed for several days prior to surgery (chest, legs, etc).
- 12) Pat yourself dry with a clean freshly washed towel.
- 13) **Do not** apply any powders, deodorants, makeup, or lotions.
- 14) Dress with clean, freshly washed clothes.