

Skin Prep Before Surgery

Using CHG soap

This handout explains how to use CHG soap to clean your body before surgery at Harborview Medical Center.

What is CHG soap?

Before your surgery, you will use a special soap to clean your body. The soap contains an *antiseptic* called *chlorhexidine gluconate* (CHG). Cleaning your body with CHG soap before surgery helps prevent infection.

If you have pain or itching after using the soap:

- Stop using the soap.
- Rinse the area well.
- Tell staff about your pain or itching on the morning of your surgery.

If you are allergic to chlorhexidine, use regular soap to shower with.

Night Before Surgery

- Shower or bathe as usual with soap and water. Use regular shampoo on your hair. Then wash off the soap completely.
- **Do not shave.**
- Turn off the water and apply the CHG soap to your body from the neck down using a wash cloth. Do **not** use CHG soap on your face, hair, genitals, or areas where you have open sores.
- If possible, let the soap stay on your skin for at least 1 minute.
- Rinse well.
- Use a clean towel to dry off.
- Do not apply any other soaps, lotions, moisturizers, or makeup after you have used the CHG soap.
- Put on clean nightwear and use clean sheets on your bed after your shower.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Please call your clinic with any questions or concerns.

Morning of Surgery

- Take another shower, following the same steps as before. You do not need to shampoo your hair again.
- Put on clean clothes after you shower.