



## **Cleaning Your Skin Before Surgery Patient Instructions**

### **The Week Before Surgery**

The most common infections after surgery involve bacteria that are normally found on the skin. These bacteria are commonly found on healthy people. You can play an important part in reducing the risk of an infection at your surgical site by practicing good skin hygiene prior to surgery.

You will be provided with an antiseptic liquid soap containing chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) and CHG cloths (SAGE Cloths) that look like baby wipes. The liquid soap may also be called Hibiclens.

Use the liquid antiseptic liquid soap for showering every day for the 5 days before to your surgery. Use the disposable antiseptic cloths (SAGE Cloths) the evening before surgery and the morning of surgery. This will reduce the number of bacteria normally on the skin. These steps will help to ensure that your skin is as free of bacteria as possible before your surgical procedure.

\*\*\*\*Do not use the liquid soap or the cloths if you are allergic to chlorhexidine gluconate. \*\*\*\*

Please follow these instructions:

- 1) Do not shave any body parts from the neck down (underarms or legs) for 2 days prior to surgery.
- 2) Use clean washcloths and towels.
- 3) You will shower or bathe with the CHG each day for 5 days prior to your surgery. For example, if your surgery is scheduled on a Monday, you will start the CHG on the Wednesday the week before your surgery.
- 4) With the 1<sup>st</sup> shower or bath, wash your hair with your normal shampoo and your body with regular soap. Rinse your hair and body thoroughly after to remove the soap and shampoo residue.
- 5) Turn the water off in the shower.
- 6) The CHG soap should only be used on your body below the neck. **DO NOT USE ON THE EYES, FACE, GENITAL, or RECTAL areas.**
- 7) Apply approximately 1/5 of the liquid CHG to a clean, damp (but not soaking) washcloth.
- 8) Starting at your surgical site, gently wipe your skin with the dampened cloth and CHG liquid soap. Pay particular attention to the area where surgery will be performed **but do not scrub your skin too hard.**
  - a. Wipe your surgical site first. Once you have exposed your surgical site to the CHG, do not wipe it again after you have washed the rest of your body.
  - b. Then, starting at your neck and shoulders, work down over the rest of your body. End at your feet.
- 9) After you have washed all areas, turn the water back on and rinse all areas where the CHG was applied.
- 10) Ask someone for help if you have difficulty reaching/washing certain areas of your body
- 11) Pat yourself dry with a clean, soft towel.
- 12) After you have completed your shower, wear only clean clothing and sleep on freshly laundered (clean) sheets.
- 13) Repeat these steps each day for the next four days. You may use your regular soap and shampoo, but only on your head, face and genital and rectal area. Use the CHG soap on the rest of your body.

## **The Day Before Surgery**

***Do not use powder, perfumes or lotions on your skin for 24 hours prior to surgery. Do not shave.***

The day prior to surgery you will shower as previously outlined. You can shower at any time, but complete your shower at least one hour before you go to bed.

Put on clean pajamas and underclothing. Sleep on freshly laundered bed linens. This will help protect you from getting bacteria back on your skin from soiled clothing or bed linens.

1. At bedtime, follow the package instructions for surgical site application of SAGE CLOTHS.
2. Remove one of the two cloths and wipe the surgical site with the Sage cloth, place the 2nd cloth in a Ziploc bag for use on the morning of surgery.
3. Your skin may feel a little tacky or sticky. This is normal and should not be wiped off. The presence of this stickiness means that the lotion is working to keep bacteria off your skin.
4. **DO NOT SHOWER** the morning of surgery. You may clean your teeth, face and genitals, but do not wash the incisional area.
5. Apply the SAGE cloth to the incisional area. Wear clean, comfortable clothes to the hospital.