

At-Home Cleaning Instructions Before Your Spine Surgery

It is very important to clean your skin at home with a special germ-killing cleanser before your surgery day. Please clean your skin with an antimicrobial soap called 4% Chlorhexidine Gluconate, or CHG, for two nights just before your surgery and on the morning of your surgery. CHG antimicrobial soap kills most germs on your skin. It reduces your risk of infection at your body's surgery site.



How do I use CHG at Home?

- Use the CHG solution in the shower.
- Use the CHG for the two nights just before your surgery and on the morning of your surgery, for a total of three showers.

How do I buy CHG?

- You can buy CHG antimicrobial solution (liquid) at your pharmacy. You do not need a prescription. Ask for the CHG antimicrobial solution at the pharmacy counter. Some brand names for CHG are Hibiclens®, Hibistat®, Exidine®, or Hex-A-Clens®.
- You will need 2-4 ounces of the 4% CHG solution for each shower. For all three showers, you will need at least 12 ounces of the solution.

What are some cautions about using CHG?

- If redness appears on the skin, or skin irritation occurs from using CHG, stop using it and contact your surgeon.
- Do not put CHG above the neck or on your genitals (private areas).
- Use CHG solution in the shower, not the bathtub. If it is not possible for you to shower, contact your surgeon's office for further instructions.

What are my specific instructions when using and cleaning with 4% CHG solution at home in the shower?

1. Buy 4 % CHG solution from your pharmacy and bring it home.
2. For your first shower, taken two nights before your surgery, wash yourself in the shower with your regular soap and shampoo first. Completely rinse the soap and shampoo off of your hair and body.
3. With the shower water off, apply the CHG solution with a clean, wet cloth. You can also apply it with cleaned hands. Gently bathe your entire body from the neck down. Include your groin area, but not your genitals (private parts).
4. Clean the area where your incision will be for about three minutes. If you cannot reach this spot, have someone help you with the bathing. Make sure they have thoroughly cleaned their hands before helping you.
5. Once you have finished putting the CHG on your skin, wait another minute. Then, turn on the water and rinse the CHG solution from your body.
6. Do not wash with regular soap after using the CHG solution.
7. For the next two showers, follow steps three-five. Be sure you do not use regular soap for any of the showers. You should only use the CHG solution.
8. Do not shave, use nail clippers, or depilatory methods to remove hair once you have applied the CHG solution.

What do you do after each shower?

- Completely dry the skin with a fresh, clean, dry towel.
- Do not use lotions, powders or deodorants.
- Use clean sheets and pajamas each day.

What do you do on the Day of Surgery?

- After you shower you will dress in clean clothes that you will wear to the hospital.
- When you arrive at the hospital, the nursing staff will ask you if you completed the three showers at home as instructed.