

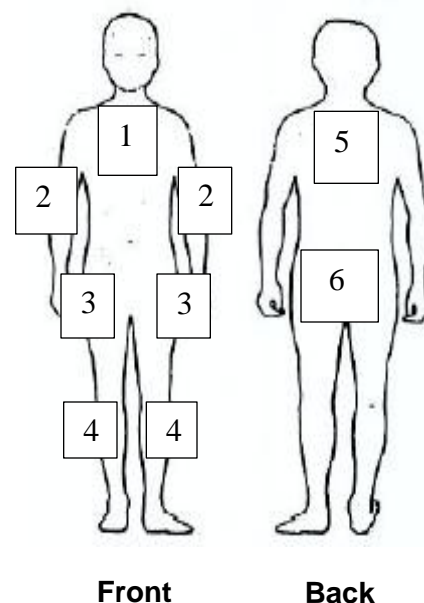
## Preparing the Skin before Surgery

## Care Instructions

**Skin bacteria are the most common cause of post-operative surgical wound infections.** These wipes will clean your skin before surgery and help prevent infection at the surgical site. The wipes contain an anti-septic called Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG). CHG kills bacteria on skin that could cause a wound infection.

### Directions:

- ✓ You will do **two** skin cleansings at home: one the **evening before** surgery and another the **morning of** surgery.
- ✓ **Do not shave** any areas of the body at least 2 days prior to surgery **except** the face, if desired.
- ✓ **Avoid contact** with eyes, ears, mouth, genital and rectal areas and colostomy if you have one.
- ✓ **Closed** packages containing wipes may be warmed by soaking in warm water. **DO NOT** microwave wipes.
- ✓ Use wipes on cool and dry skin.
- ✓ **Gently** wipe skin as described below.
- ✓ Allow area to air dry **one minute**. **DO NOT** rinse. It is normal for the skin to have a temporary "tacky" or mildly itchy feel for several minutes after the antiseptic solution is applied.
- ✓ Dress in **freshly laundered nightwear**. Sleep on **freshly laundered sheets**.
- ✓ Throw wipes in garbage. **DO NOT** flush in the toilet.



### Prepping the skin the evening before surgery:

- **Shower or bathe and shampoo your hair** as usual the evening before surgery. **Wait one hour** after your shower before using the wipes.
- **Use one cloth** to wipe each area of the **body** for 20 seconds in the following order (you will use a total of 6 cloths for this process):
  1. Wipe your **neck, chest and abdomen** – not the face.
  2. Wipe **both arms**, front and back, starting with the shoulder and ending at the fingertips. Be sure to thoroughly wipe the arm pit areas.
  3. Wipe your **right and left hip** followed by your groin. Be sure to wipe folds in the groin area.
  4. Wipe **both legs**, starting at the thigh and ending at the toes. Be sure to thoroughly wipe behind your knees.
  5. Wipe your **back** starting at the base of your neck to your waist line. Help may be needed to reach.
  6. Wipe your outer **buttocks** – not the rectal area.
- **Once you use the wipes do not shower, bathe or apply lotions, moisturizers, or makeup. Do not rinse your skin.**

**NOTE:**  
**If you are scheduled for a c/section or are currently breastfeeding, DO NOT use the wipes on your breasts.**

### The morning of surgery:

- **DO NOT** shower, bathe or shampoo in the morning.
- Repeat the same skin cleansing process as outlined above.
- Wear freshly laundered, clean clothes to the hospital.

## CHG Pre-Operative Skin Preparation: Frequently Asked Questions (patient handout)

**Q: Why does my skin feel itchy or tacky after using the CHG wipes? Is that a reaction?**

**A:** You may experience a very mild itching sensation as the CHG dries on the skin. Avoid rubbing the skin too vigorously to minimize the itching. There will be a tacky feeling for a little while afterwards as well. This is normal. However, if a rash or skin irritation develops, do not do the second skin cleansing and notify the staff in the pre-operative area the day of surgery.

**Q: Why does the skin need to cool off before applying the CHG?**

**A:** It is ok to apply the CHG if your skin temperature is normal or cooler. When the skin is warm the pores are open and you are more likely to develop a skin irritation.

**Q: What if I already have a rash, burn, cut, open wound or other irritation of the skin? Should I still use it?**

**A:** Applying CHG to non-intact skin has not been proven to be directly harmful. However, if you already have this type of condition, the application of CHG over those areas may increase the skin's irritation.

**Q: Why do we need to apply it so many times and over most of the body?**

**A:** The protocol we are using to prepare your skin takes advantage of a “stacked effect” of repeated usage. Each preparation lasts for at least 6 hours before bacteria start to grow back. Each subsequent preparation decreases your whole body's skin bacterial levels prior to surgery which then decreases your chances of developing a post-operative infection.

**Q: If my surgical site is covered by a splint or cast, do I need to do this skin preparation?**

**A:** You should be instructed to cleanse the full body as outlined with the exception of the splint or cast areas, unless the surgeon states otherwise.

***Note: Do not use on face/head or genitalia or breasts if currently breast feeding or are scheduled for a caesarean section***