

Preparing Your Skin Before Open Heart Surgery

If you have any questions about these instructions, call:

Halifax Infirmary Day Surgery

- › Phone: 902-473-3187
- › Hours: Monday to Friday,
6 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Preparing Your Skin Before Open Heart Surgery

You will get a package of cloths to clean your skin before surgery. The cloths are pre-moistened with 2% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG). CHG is used to clean and prepare your skin before surgery.

Do not open the package until you are ready to use the cloths.

2 days before your surgery:

- **Do not shave any part of your body**, including your face, your legs, or under your arms. Shaving before you apply 2% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) may cause redness or make your skin itch.
- You may continue to bathe or shower as usual.

The night before your surgery:

- Shower or bathe.
- **1 hour after your shower or bath**, use 3 CHG cloths to clean your skin. Follow the instructions on the next page.
- Your skin should be completely dry and cool before applying CHG.
- **Do not let the cloth touch your eyes, ears, or mouth.**
- After you use the CHG cloths, **do not shower or bathe.**
- CHG works best when left on the skin. **Let the CHG dry completely. DO NOT RINSE OFF.**
- **Do not use lotions, moisturizers, or makeup.** Water and ingredients commonly found in personal care products can lower the cleansing effects of CHG.
- When applied to sensitive skin, CHG may cause skin irritation such as a temporary itching sensation and/or redness. Showering or shaving right before applying CHG may make this worse. If itching or redness continues, rinse affected areas with warm (not hot) water and stop using CHG.
- **If you have a package of more than 3 cloths, make sure to re-seal the package so the other cloths do not dry out.**

Instructions for using CHG cloths:

1. Using the 1st cloth:

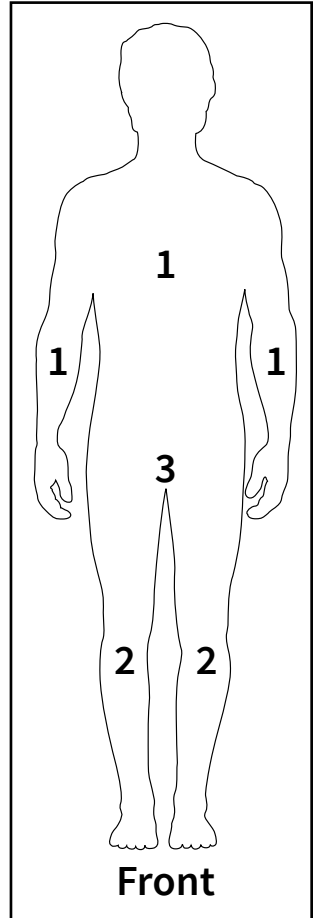
- Gently wipe your neck and chest.
 - › Start at your chin and end at your belly button.
 - › Make sure to wipe from shoulder to shoulder.
- Still using the 1st cloth, wipe both arms.
 - › Start at your shoulder and end at your fingertips.

2. Using the 2nd cloth:

- Gently wipe the inside and front of both legs.
 - › Start at your ankle and wipe towards your groin.

3. Using the 3rd cloth:

- Gently wipe your groin.
 - › Make sure you wipe between any skin folds (not inside genitals).
- After using the 3 cloths, let your skin dry for 1 minute.
- **Do not rinse any part of your skin.** It is normal for the skin to feel sticky for a few minutes after the CHG is applied.
- Dress in clean clothes.



The morning of your surgery:

- **Do not bathe or shower.**
- Repeat the cleaning steps from the night before using 3 new CHG cloths. Follow the same instructions on the previous page.

Reminders:

- Follow the instructions on the previous page to get your skin ready for surgery.
- Avoid contact with your eyes, ears, and mouth.
- It is normal for the skin to feel sticky for a few minutes after the CHG is applied.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.