Preparing Your Skin Before Orthopaedic Surgery

Instructions for Patients

If you have any questions about these instructions, please call Halifax Infirmary Day Surgery at 902-473-3187, Monday to Friday between 6 a.m.-4 p.m.
Preparing Your Skin Before Orthopaedic Surgery

Two days before your surgery:

• Do not shave your legs, back, or under your arms. Shaving before you apply 2% Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) may make your skin red or itchy. You can shave your face if needed. Electric razors are the best choice.

• You can continue to bathe or shower as usual until the night before surgery (see page 2).

Note for all patients:
When applied to sensitive skin, CHG may cause skin irritation such as a temporary itching feeling and/or redness. Showering or shaving right before applying CHG may make this worse. If itching or redness doesn’t go away, rinse the itchy/red areas with warm (not hot) water and stop using CHG.
Instructions:
• The night before surgery, shower or bathe using soap and a clean towel.

• Do not use lotions, moisturizers, or makeup. Water and ingredients in personal care products can lower the antiseptic effects of CHG and make it less effective.

• On the morning of your surgery, use the CHG pre-moistened cloths according to the instructions for your surgery type on the following pages.

• 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.

• Follow any other pre-surgery instructions your healthcare team has given you. This pamphlet is only about your skin preparation before surgery.

You are having the following orthopaedic surgery:
☐ Upper body other than your back (see page 3)
☐ Lower body (see page 4, top)
☐ Foot and ankle (see page 4, bottom)
☐ Back (see page 5)
For all upper body orthopaedic surgeries (except surgery on your back – see page 5), use CHG cloths on these areas:

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.

2. **Using the 2nd cloth**, wipe both arms:
   › Start at your shoulder and end at your fingertips.

- After using the 2 cloths, let areas dry for 1 minute.
- Do not rinse any part of your skin.
- Dress in clean clothes.
For patients having lower body orthopaedic surgery, use CHG cloths on these areas:

1. **Using the 1\textsuperscript{st} cloth**, gently wipe the side, front and back of your leg including your hip:
   - Start at your hip and wipe towards your ankle.

2. **Using the 2\textsuperscript{nd} cloth**, gently wipe your groins:
   - Make sure you wipe in any skin folds (not inside genitals).

   - After using the 2 cloths, let areas dry for 1 minute.
   - Do not rinse any part of your skin.
   - Dress in clean clothes.

For patients having foot and ankle surgery, use cloths in the following areas:

1. **Using the 1\textsuperscript{st} cloth**, starting at the knee of the leg that will be operated on, gently wipe the front and back of the lower leg to the ankle.

2. **Using the 2\textsuperscript{nd} cloth**, gently wipe your foot.

   - After using the 2 cloths, let areas dry for 1 minute.
   - Do not rinse any part of your skin.
   - Dress in clean clothes.
If you are having back surgery, please get help from a family member, friend, or someone at home. Use CHG cloths on these areas:

1. **Using the 1st cloth**, have someone gently wipe your shoulders and back:
   - Start at the hairline of your neck and end at your buttocks (bum).
   - Make sure to wipe from shoulder to shoulder.

2. **Using the 2nd cloth**, wipe both arms:
   - Start at your shoulder and end at your fingertips.

- After using the 2 cloths, let areas dry for 1 minute.
- Do not rinse any part of your skin.
- Dress in clean clothes.
Reminders

• Avoid touching the CHG to your eyes, ears, and mouth.

• It is normal for the skin to have a temporary “tacky” feel for a few minutes after the CHG cloths are used.

• Call the number on the front cover if you have any questions.

Notes: