

Preparing your skin before orthopaedic surgery using chlorhexidine gluconate skin cleanser

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about how to prepare your skin before surgery. The purpose of preparing your skin before surgery is to ensure that it is thoroughly cleansed to reduce the amount of bacteria that is normally found on the skin. This will reduce the risk of you developing an infection. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Preparing your skin before surgery

When you come to the hospital for your pre-assessment, the nurse will give you one bottle of chlorhexidine gluconate skin cleanser (HiBiScrub® Plus). This is an antiseptic which you need to use to prepare your skin before surgery. Preparation of your skin should start two days before the planned date of your surgery.

Do not use the chlorhexidine solution, and let the doctor or nurse caring for you know, if any of the following apply to you:

- you have a known allergy to chlorhexidine gluconate
- you have an underlying skin condition
- you have open wounds or broken skin.

The three steps below outline the skin preparation process, which should be followed carefully (please let your nurse know if you have any difficulties).

Step 1	Two days before surgery	Stop routine shaving of your body.
Step 2	One day before surgery	Morning – wash/shower or bathe normally. Evening – use chlorhexidine skin cleanser to wash your whole body, as described in the instructions on page 2.
Step 3	Morning of surgery	Before coming to hospital – use chlorhexidine skin cleanser to wash your whole body. On arrival at hospital – the nurse looking after you may ask you to wash again using the chlorhexidine skin cleanser.

Step 1: Two days before your surgery

Routine shaving should be stopped at least two days before your surgery on all areas of your body, including the legs and underarms. This is to prevent any skin irritation or damage which could lead to an infection. Continue to wash/shower or bathe with your regular products at home. You can continue to shave your face and neck.

Step 2: One day before your surgery

In the **morning** of the day before your surgery, you can wash/shower/bathe and wash your hair with the regular products you use at home.

On the **evening** of the day before your surgery, your skin needs to be prepared using the chlorhexidine skin cleanser, as explained below. You may need somebody to help you to ensure that all body areas are covered. **Do not allow this product to come into contact with your eyes, ears and mouth.** Occasionally the chlorhexidine solution may cause skin irritation, such as temporary itching and/or redness.

Directions for using the chlorhexidine gluconate skin cleanser (HiBiScrub® Plus):

1. Wet the skin on your face, then wash your face with undiluted chlorhexidine skin cleanser, especially around the nose. **Avoid contact with your eyes, ears and mouth.**
2. Wet the skin on your body, ideally in the bath or shower.
3. Apply the chlorhexidine skin cleanser directly to the skin using a clean cloth or sponge, paying particular attention to the armpits, groin and buttocks.
4. Leave the solution on the skin for about three minutes.
5. Rinse off thoroughly.
6. Now repeat Steps 1 to 4, but this time starting with your hair.
7. After the final rinse, dry yourself with a clean towel.
8. Put on clean clothes.



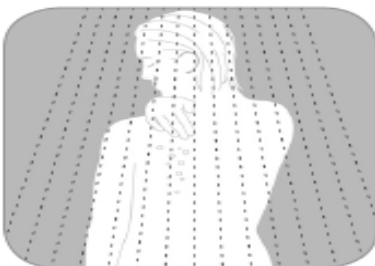
1 Wash your face with undiluted HiBi SCRUB PLUS, especially around the nose, avoiding your eyes and ears.



2 Using a clean sponge, working downwards, wash the armpits.



3 Continue washing downwards and wash well around the groin area.



4 After washing all these important areas, rinse off under the shower.



5 Now repeat steps 1 to 4, but this time starting with the hair.



6 After a final rinse, dry yourself thoroughly and put on clean clothes.

Once you have started preparing your skin before surgery, please do not apply any other bathing products, lotions, moisturisers or makeup. This is because water and ingredients commonly found in personal care products can reduce the effectiveness of chlorhexidine.

Step 3: On the morning of your surgery

1. **Please repeat instructions 1 to 8 on page 2 before coming to hospital.**
2. Pay particular attention to folds in the stomach and groin areas.
3. Wash the **buttocks and the area in between them thoroughly.**
4. The nurse looking after you may ask you to repeat steps 1 to 6 above when you arrive at hospital.
5. If you require assistance, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you. It is very important that we ensure all body areas are covered.

Why is it important that I follow all of the above steps?

Many microorganisms (germs) live in and on our bodies, and are also present in our surroundings. Our skin prevents germs from entering our bodies. A surgical wound infection occurs when germs enter the cut that the surgeon makes through the skin to perform an operation. Using the chlorhexidine skin cleanser properly will reduce the amount of bacteria on your skin which can potentially enter the cut. This may help to reduce the chances of you getting a wound infection.

How should I look after my wound after my surgery?

Before you leave the hospital we will give you a leaflet about caring for your wound when you are at home.

Allergic reactions

There have been very rare reports of allergic reactions in patients who have used products containing chlorhexidine. In some cases these have been severe (anaphylaxis). If you experience any signs of allergy following use of the chlorhexidine skin cleanser - for example a rash, breathing difficulties, palpitations, or swelling of the lips, tongue and throat - or if you feel unwell in any way, please seek medical advice immediately. Let them know that you have used chlorhexidine skin cleanser recently, and take the bottle with you if possible.

Useful sources of information

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the orthopaedic team advice line,
t: 020 7188 4446, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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