



Preparing the Inpatient for Surgery "The Pre-operative Scrub"

Preparing or "prepping" skin before surgery reduces the risk of infection at the surgical site. To make the process easier, this facility has chosen disposable cloths moistened with a rinse-free 2% Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) antiseptic solution (Sage® 2% Chlorhexidine Cloths). It is also acceptable to use a 4% CHG solution (Hibiclens®). The steps below outline the prepping process and should be carefully followed.

PREPARE THE PATIENT:

- Explain the rationale and the procedure to the patient.
- Showering or bathing is not necessary unless the skin is visibly soiled. If showering or bathing is desired, do so at least 2 hours prior to the use of the disposable cloths. If the patient can take a shower with CHG (Hibiclens®) see italicized directions below.
- Place the patient in a comfortable position that will expose the body for the scrub.
- Use a bath blanket over the patient to prevent them getting chilled.
- Assess the skin condition of the area(s) that will be prepared for any rash, lacerations or abrasions and report any abnormal findings to the MD/NP before proceeding.
- **Do not remove any hair.** Avoid shaving or the use of any topical hair removers in these areas. Shaving/hair removal can increase the risk of infection for the patient. Do not use any type of topical hair removers.
- Once prepping begins, do not apply lotions, moisturizers or makeup.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROCEDURE

NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY

Use **one multi-pack** (three inner packages) of the disposable cloths to prep the entire body.

- Open all three packages in the multi-pack. Do not microwave the package prior to use. Warmers are available, if desired, from the manufacturer.
- Wipe down the patient's body the night before their surgery, like you would with a washcloth. ***Avoid contact with the patient's eyes, ears and mouth. Wipe the surgical site vigorously back and forth for about 3 minutes, completely wetting the treatment area, then discard the cloth. Use the remaining cloths to wipe the whole body.***
- Six cloths are provided to use; one for the patient's neck, chest and abdomen, one for the patient's arms, one for the patient's legs, one for the patient's back and so forth... ***Use all cloths in the packages***
- If the patient is on an EKG monitor and the monitor cannot be removed - scrub around the

leads first, and then place new electrodes away from the sites where the incision(s) will be located. Attach the monitor to the new leads, take off the old leads and scrub those areas. If the leads are soiled, wipe them clean before attaching the new leads.

- Allow area to air dry for one minute. **Do not rinse.** It is normal for the skin to have a temporary "tacky" feel for several minutes after the antiseptic solution has been applied.
- **IF THE PATIENT CAN SHOWER:**
 - ✚ Provide them with the antiseptic CHG solution (i.e. Hibiclens®), a clean washcloth and clean towel. Have clean clothes available to put on after the shower. Ask them to follow these directions:
 - ✚ With each shower, wash and rinse your hair first using your normal shampoo. Make sure you completely rinse the shampoo from your hair and body.
 - ✚ Apply the antiseptic solution (Hibiclens®) to a wet clean washcloth and lather your entire body from the neck down. Never use the antiseptic solution near your eyes. Turn the water off in the shower or move away from the water spray to avoid rinsing the soap solution off. Gently wash your body and focus the scrub on the areas where the incision(s) will be located for about 3 minutes. Avoid scrubbing your skin too hard.
 - ✚ Once you have completed the scrub, turn the water on and rinse the Hibiclens® soap solution off your body completely.
 - ✚ Do not wash with regular soap after you have used the antiseptic soap solution (Hibiclens®).
 - ✚ Pat yourself dry with a clean freshly washed towel. **DO NOT** apply any powders, deodorants or lotions. Dress with freshly washed clothes

STEP #2: MORNING OF SURGERY

Do not bathe with soap as the antiseptic should remain on the skin from the previous night application. A CHG shower is acceptable for the morning scrub.

- ***Repeat the above procedure either using the CHG solution or the CHG cloths***

DOCUMENTATION:

Document the procedure in the treatment section of your nursing flowsheet/computer documentation. Record any abnormal skin assessments and the MD/NP notification.

REFERENCES:

Lippincott Williams and Wilkins On-line Procedure Manual (2004) Preoperative skin preparation.
Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN). Recommended Practices for Skin Preparation of Patients, In: Standards, Recommended Practices and Guidelines. Denver: AORN; 2000:329-333.
Sage 2% Chlorhexidine Gluconate Cloth Manufacturer Instructions (2006).