

# 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 your skin 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, 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 your planned date of surgery.

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

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

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

<b>Step 1</b>	Two days <b>before</b> surgery	Stop routine shaving of your body.
<b>Step 2</b>	One day <b>before</b> 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.
<b>Step 3</b>	Morning of surgery	Before coming to hospital – use chlorhexidine skin cleanser to wash your whole body. On arrival to 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 including your hair with the regular products you use at home.

**On the evening** of the day before 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 a temporary itching sensation and/or redness.

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

1. Wash your face with undiluted chlorhexidine skin cleanser, especially around the nose (ensure you wet your skin first) **avoiding contact with your eyes, ears and mouth.**
2. Wet your skin 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 the skin thoroughly.
6. Now repeat Steps 1 to 4 but this time starting with the hair.
7. After final rinse, dry with a clean towel.
8. Put on clean clothes.



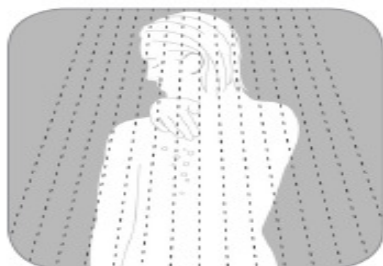
**1** Wash your face with undiluted **HiBi SCRUB PLUS**, especially around the nose, avoiding your eyes and ears.



**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 the instructions 1- 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 request you to repeat steps 1-6 above when you arrive in 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 micro-organisms (germs) live in and on our body, 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 your skin to do 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 surgery?**

Before you leave the hospital we will give you a leaflet about how to care 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.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the orthopaedic team advice line on 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](http://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 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### Infection Prevention and Control Team

This is a team of specially trained team of nurses and doctors who advise doctors, nurses and other staff on how to prevent and control the spread of infection.

**t:** 020 7188 3153 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**e:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'      **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's      **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language Support Services

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

**t:** 020 7188 8815      **fax:** 020 7188 5953

### 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](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Leaflet number: 3588/VER2**

Date published: February 2014

Review date: February 2017

© 2014 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust