Preoperative showering instructions

At BIDMC, we are taking steps to reduce the chance of infection after surgery. Washing with a special soap reduces the number of germs on your skin. Your surgeon has asked that you follow the instructions below to clean your skin before your surgery.

You will need to shower the **night before and the morning of surgery** with a special antiseptic soap called chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG). You can purchase this soap at the drug store if you have not received it from your surgeon or the hospital. It is called either “chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) antiseptic soap” or “Hibiclens” and may come in 2% or 4% strengths. You may use either.

**Note: Do not use CHG soap/Hibiclens:**
- on your head, face, or vaginal area
- on any skin that is not intact, or on any open wounds
- if you have an allergy to chlorhexidine-containing products

**Showering procedure: Complete the night before **AND** the morning of surgery**

- In the shower, **wash and rinse your hair first using your normal shampoo**. Make sure you completely rinse the shampoo from your hair and body.

- **Wet your entire body.** Then turn the water off or move away from the water spray.

- **Apply the CHG soap** to your body, starting under your chin. **Do NOT use it near your eyes, ears, or mouth. If you get this soap into your eyes, rinse thoroughly with warm water.**

- Gently wash your entire body from the chin down, staying out of the water spray as you wash. Gently wash the area(s) where your surgery will be for about three minutes. If your surgery is on your face, head, or vaginal area, do **not** wash these areas with the CHG soap, but do wash the rest of your body. If possible, have someone help you wash areas you can’t reach, such as your back.

- **If you have difficulty completing the wash** because you can’t reach certain areas, or for any other reason, **please tell your nurse** when you get to the medical center and we will complete the cleaning in the operating room.

- Once you have completed the scrub, **rinse the CHG soap off your body completely using shower water. Do not wash with regular soap after you have used the antiseptic CHG soap solution.**

- **Pat yourself** dry with a clean, freshly-washed towel. **DO NOT** apply any powders, deodorants, or lotions. Dress with clean, freshly-washed clothes.

- **Do not shave** in the area of your surgery.