

# Showering Before Surgery

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Your surgeon has asked you to take 2 showers before surgery.

## Why is this important?

It is normal for bacteria (germs) to be on your skin. The skin protects us from these germs. When you have surgery, we cut the skin. Sometimes germs get into the cuts and cause infection (illness caused by germs). By following the instructions below and using special soap, you will lower the number of germs on your skin. This decreases your chance of infection.

## Special soap

Buy or get 8 ounces of antiseptic surgical soap called 4% CHG. Common name brands of this soap are Hibiclens and Exidine.

You can find it at your local pharmacy, clinic or retail store. If you have trouble, ask your pharmacist to help you find the right substitute.

### A note about shaving:

Do not shave within 12 inches of your incision (surgical cut) area for at least 3 days before surgery. Shaving can make small cuts in the skin. This puts you at a higher risk of infection.

## Items you will need for each shower:

- 1 newly washed towel
- 4 ounces of one of the above soaps
- Clean pajamas or clothes to change into

## Follow these instructions:

Follow these steps the evening before surgery and the morning of surgery.

1. Wash your hair and body with your regular shampoo and soap. Make sure you rinse the shampoo and soap from your hair and body.
2. Using clean hands, apply about 2 ounces of soap gently on your skin from the neck to your toes. Use on your groin area last. **Do not** use this soap on your face or head. If you get any soap in your eyes, ears or mouth, rinse right away.
3. Repeat step 2. It is very important to let the soap stay on your skin for at least 1 minute.
4. Rinse well and dry off using a clean towel.

If you feel any tingling, itching or other irritation, rinse right away. It is normal to feel some coolness on the skin after using the antiseptic soap. Your skin may feel a bit dry after the shower, but **do not** use any lotions, creams or moisturizers. Do not use hair spray or other products in your hair.

5. Dress in freshly washed clothes or pajamas. Use fresh pillowcases and sheets on your bed.

## Repeat these steps the morning of surgery.

If you have any questions about showering or an allergy to CHG soap, please call your surgery center.

# Preparing for Your Surgery

## *A Patient and Family Guide to Surgery and Anesthesia*

Thank you for choosing us to manage your care. Your comfort and safety are our top concerns.

You and your family are the most important members of your care team. You will need to take an active role in your care.

Be sure to ask questions and learn all that you can about your surgery. If you have any safety concerns, tell a nurse as soon as possible.

This handout includes:

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If your child is having surgery, please ask for a copy of *Preparing for Your Child's Surgery: A Patient and Family Guide to Surgery and Anesthesia*.

This handout is for information only.  
It does not replace the advice of your doctor.  
Always follow your doctor's advice.  
*Please tell us if you need a language interpreter.*

### Important things to do before surgery

#### *Within 30 days of surgery*

- Schedule an exam ("History and Physical") with your family doctor.\* We may give you some forms for your doctor to fill out. Make sure they send the report to your surgery center. Tell your doctor if:
  - You have a pacemaker or ICD (cardiac defibrillator). Bring the ID card to surgery.
  - You have an implanted stimulator (deep brain, bladder, spinal cord, etc.). Bring the remote control to surgery.
  - You're a smoker. People who smoke have a higher risk of infection after surgery. Ask your doctor how you can quit smoking.
  
- If you have diabetes, work with your doctor to control your blood sugar. If it's not well-controlled, we may need to delay surgery (or you may have problems healing afterward).
  
- If your surgeon asks you to see your dentist: You'll need to complete any dental work before surgery. Your dentist must send a letter to your surgery center saying it's okay to do the surgery.
  
- Call your insurance to see what it will and won't pay for. Ask if they need to pre-approve the surgery. (If no insurance, call 612-672-2000.)

\* *Is your surgery in Minneapolis? If so, you may have your exam at the Preoperative Assessment Center (PAC). Call 612-676-5008 to schedule.*

## ***At least 10 days before surgery***

- Register for your surgery: Go to [fairview.org/reg](http://fairview.org/reg) or call 612-672-2000. Have your insurance card ready. (Skip this step if you'll have surgery at University of Minnesota Health Clinics and Surgery Center.)
- Arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery. If you'll go home the same day as your surgery, you may not drive, take a cab or take public transportation by yourself.
- Arrange for someone to stay with you for 24 hours after you go home. This person must be a responsible adult, 18 years or older.
- Complete an advance directive, if you wish. This tells us what treatment you would want—and who would make health care decisions—if you could no longer speak for yourself. You may download the form from [www.fvfiles.com/1628.pdf](http://www.fvfiles.com/1628.pdf), or request a copy from your surgery center.

## ***A few days before surgery***

- If you take medicine: You may need to stop it until after the surgery. Follow your doctor's orders.
- A nurse will call to review your health history and surgery instructions. (This call is not about your insurance details.) If you don't get a call by the evening before your surgery, please call your surgery center.
- Call your surgeon's clinic if there's any change in your health. This includes signs of a cold or flu (sore throat, runny nose, cough, rash, fever).

## ***The day before surgery***

- Don't smoke, chew tobacco, drink alcohol or take over-the-counter medicine (unless your surgeon tells you to) for 24 hours before and after surgery.
- Take a shower or bath the night before surgery. Follow the instructions your clinic gave you. (If no instructions, use regular soap.) Put on clean pajamas and use clean bed sheets.

## ***Plan your surgery day***

If you have questions on the day of surgery, please call your surgery center.

- Take another shower or bath in the morning. Follow the instructions your clinic gave you. If no instructions, use regular soap.
- After your bath or shower, put on clean, loose clothing.
- Don't put on makeup, powder, deodorant, lotion or cologne. Remove all jewelry and piercings.
- Bring these items with you:
  - Medical and prescription cards
  - Money or credit cards for parking and co-pays, if needed.
  - Your advance directive, if you have one.
  - A list of all the medicines you take. Include vitamins, minerals, herbs and over-the-counter drugs. Note any drug allergies.
  - Your inhaler, eye drops and CPAP machine, if you use these at home.
  - Remote control for any implanted stimulator.
- Leave at home: All medicines (except inhalers and eye drops), extra cash, jewelry, other valuables.

## ***Eating and drinking guidelines***

For your safety, please follow the guidelines your surgeon gave you for eating and drinking. If you didn't receive any guidelines, use the guidelines below.

### ***Why is this so important?***

During surgery, the muscles that keep food and liquid in the stomach will relax. If there's anything in the stomach—even a small amount—it may get into the lungs. This can cause a serious infection.

We want to keep you safe. If you have even a small amount of food or drink after the allowed time, we may need to delay or cancel the surgery.

## **When to stop food, liquids and medicines**

All foods and liquids—whether by mouth or feeding tube—must be finished by the times noted below (unless you received special instructions). A nurse may call to explain the exact times you must stop eating and drinking.

- Eat and drink as usual until **8 hours** before surgery. After that, no food, milk or chewing tobacco.
- Keep drinking clear liquids until **2 hours** before surgery. These are drinks you can see through, like water, clear juice, and black coffee or tea (without milk or cream).
- Nothing by mouth within **2 hours** of surgery. This includes gum, candy and breath mints.
- Ask the care team if it's safe to take your medicine the day of surgery. If so, take it with a small sip of water.

## **Day of surgery**

### **When you arrive, you will:**

- Check in. If you're under age 18, you must be with a parent or legal guardian.
- Receive a copy of the Patients' Bill of Rights. If you do not receive a copy, please ask for one.
- Change into surgery clothes.
- Meet with your care team. The surgeon will explain the surgery again. He or she may also mark the site where the surgery will be done. The anesthesia team will tell you what kind of anesthesia (medicine) they'll use to keep you comfortable during surgery.
- Be asked to sign a consent form. This form states that you allow the surgeon to do the surgery. Before you sign the form, be sure to ask any questions you may have. Keep asking questions until you understand the answers.

*Remember:* It's okay to remind doctors and nurses to wash their hands before touching you.

For safety reasons, we will ask you the same questions (like your name and birth date) many times.

Family can stay with you until it's time for surgery. Then, they will move to the waiting area. Note that cell phones are not allowed in some areas.

We will move you to the operating room. If you have questions about what will happen here, talk to your care team.

### **After surgery**

You will move to a recovery room, where we'll watch you closely. If you have pain or discomfort, tell your nurse. He or she will try to make you comfortable.

If you're staying overnight, we will move you to your hospital room after you're awake. If you're going home, we may move you to another room. Friends and family may be able to join you.

The length of time you spend in recovery depends on the type of medicine you received, your medical condition and the type of surgery you had.

A nurse will check your comfort level often during your stay. He or she will work with you to manage your pain. Remember:

- All pain is real. There are many ways to control pain. We'll help you find what works best for you.
- Ask for pain medicine when you need it. Don't try to "tough it out"—this can make you feel worse. Always take your medicine as ordered.
- Medicine doesn't work the same for everyone. If your medicine isn't working, tell your nurse. There may be other medicines or treatments we can try.

We'll let you know when you're ready to leave the surgery center. Before you leave, we will tell you how to care for yourself at home and prevent infections. **If you don't understand something, please say so. We will answer any questions you have.**