Showering or Bathing Before Hip and Knee Replacement Surgery

Your surgeon has asked you to take 3 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 12 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

Follow these instructions:

Two days before 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 CHG 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.
The evening before 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 CHG 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 clean sheets and pillowcases on your bed.

The morning of surgery

1. Using clean hands, apply about 2 ounces of CHG 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.

2. Repeat step 1. It is very important to let the soap stay on your skin for at least 1 minute.

3. 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.

4. Dress in clean clothes.

If you have any questions about showering or an allergy to CHG soap, please call the Preadmissions Nursing Department at the hospital where you are having your surgery.

Fairview Lakes: 651-982-7501
Fairview Northland: 763-389-7767
Fairview Range: 218-362-6709 or 1-877-362-6719
Fairview Southdale: 952-924-8367
Maple Grove: 763-898-1435
University of Minnesota Medical Center, East Bank: 612-273-4333
University of Minnesota Medical Center, West Bank: 612-273-6312

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please let us know. We provide many free services including sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, TTYs, telephone amplifiers, note takers and written materials.