



# Preparing for your surgery

**UCI Health**

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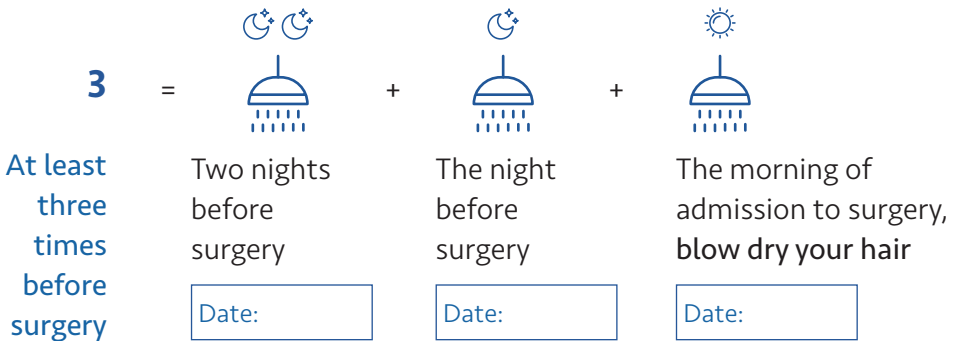


# Shower and shampoo with chlorhexidine (CHG) soap to prevent infection

You should shower and shampoo with CHG soap at least three times before your surgery.

CHG is a special soap that kills germs and prevents infection. Please use it for bathing all skin and shampooing before your surgery.

Cleaning with CHG soap several times before surgery blocks germ growth and provides the best protection when used **at least three times in a row**.



## Important reminders:

- Do not use any other soaps or body wash when using CHG. Other soaps can block the CHG benefits. It's very important to only use the mesh sponge provided in your kit.
- After showering, do not apply lotion, cream, powder, deodorant or hair conditioner.
- Ask your doctor whether you can shave your facial hair.
- CHG is safe to use on minor wounds, rashes, burns and over staples and stitches.
- Skin reactions are rare but may occur. If you have a skin reaction, stop using CHG soap and call your doctor.
- If you have a skin reaction to CHG soap, please follow the bathing instructions using an over-the-counter regular soap and shampoo instead of CHG.

## How to shower with CHG soap

1. Rinse your body with warm water.
2. Wash your hair with CHG soap instead of your regular shampoo. Rinse your hair with water. Do not apply hair conditioner.
3. Only use the mesh sponge provided in the kit with CHG. The mesh sponge in the kit helps the CHG soap to lather. Wet the sponge. Turn off the water. Add CHG soap.
4. Firmly massage all areas: neck, arms, chest, back, abdomen (including cleaning inside the belly button/umbilicus), hips, groin, genitals (external only) and buttocks. Clean your hands, fingers, legs and feet, including between your toes.
5. Completely lather all body areas with CHG soap twice before rinsing.
6. Turn on the water and rinse CHG off your body.
7. Dry off with a clean towel.
8. Do not apply lotions, powders, deodorant, hair spray/gels or leave-in conditioners.
9. Use clean clothes and freshly laundered bed linens.
10. Dry your hair completely with a hair dryer.

**Tip:** Pay special attention to the surgical site and the surrounding skin. Clean inside your belly button (umbilicus) with CHG soap, as bacteria can collect there. Ask for help cleaning hard-to-reach areas. Ensure your back is thoroughly cleaned before your spine or back surgery.

**Repeat steps 1–10 each time you shower.**

**Caution: When using CHG soap, avoid contact with eyes, nose, ear canals and mouth.**

## Nasal decolonization treatment

Some procedures will use products to clear germs from your nose before surgery (nasal decolonization). **If your procedure requires this, you will be provided the materials and application instructions.** Please refer to the detailed instructions provided for nasal decolonization.

If your kit does not contain these materials, then your procedure does not require nasal decolonization. If you are unsure, we encourage you to talk to your provider.

### Preparing for your surgery nasal decolonization treatment protocol

- Staphylococcus aureus or Staph is a very common germ that lives on our skin or in our nose.
- Some Staph germs are resistant, meaning they cannot be killed by some antibiotics.
- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, also known as MRSA, is a type of Staph that is resistant to some antibiotics used to treat Staph infections.
- The process of removing Staph germs from our skin or nose is called decolonization.
- Decolonizing our skin or nose to remove Staph or other germs can help reduce the risk of infection from surgery.
- Your doctor is asking you to use a nasal antibiotic ointment or povidone iodine to decolonize the nose before surgery.
- In addition, you will receive a special soap to clean your body.

## Nasal decolonization instructions:

- Begin five days before your surgery.
- Use every morning and night for five days.
- Blow your nose to remove mucus before use.
- Clean your hands with soap and water before use.

### If your doctor recommended povidone iodine swabs



1. Remove povidone iodine swab from the packaging.
2. Tilt your head back just a bit.
3. Insert the first povidone iodine swab into one nostril and rotate the swab for 30 seconds against the sides of the nose using a circular motion. Throw away swab when complete.
4. Repeat the process using the second swab in the other nostril.

### If your doctor recommended mupirocin



1. Place a pea-sized amount of mupirocin ointment into each nostril using a clean cotton swab for each nostril. Throw away swabs when complete.
  2. Press the sides of the nostrils together and rub for one minute.
- Clean your hands after application is completed.
  - **Do not use other nasal/nose medicines** (such as nasal sprays) during the five-day decolonization treatment.

# FAQs about surgical site infections

## What is a surgical site infection (SSI)?

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most patients who have surgery do not develop an infection. However, infections develop in about one to three out of every 100 patients who have surgery.

Some of the common symptoms of a surgical site infection are:

- Redness and pain around the area where you had surgery
- Drainage of cloudy fluid from your surgical wound
- Fever

## Can SSIs be treated?

Yes. Most surgical site infections can be treated with antibiotics. Your doctor's choice of antibiotic will depend on the bacteria (germs) likely to cause the infection. In rare occasions, patients with SSIs need another surgery to treat the infection.

## What are some of the prevention products that UCI Health uses to reduce SSIs?

- You will be provided chlorhexidine (CHG) soap and instructions on how to shower and shampoo your hair before your surgery. CHG gets rid of germs better than regular soap and water, helps prevent infection and continues to work for hours.
- Some procedures will use products to clear germs from your nose before surgery (nasal decolonization). If your procedure requires this, you will be provided the materials and application instructions. The purpose of this is also to reduce the risk of postsurgical infection from a bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus*, which commonly lives in the nose.

## To prevent SSIs, UCI Health doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers:

- Clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after caring for each patient.
- Monitor your temperature and use a special warming blanket to keep you warm before, during and after your operation to improve surgical wound healing.

- Use electric clippers, not a shaving razor, if some of your hair needs to be removed at the beginning of your surgery.
- Clean their hands and arms up to the elbows with an antiseptic agent just before surgery.
- Wear special hair covers, masks, gowns and gloves during surgery to keep the surgery area clean.
- Give you antibiotics before your surgery starts if your procedure requires this.
  - In most cases, the antibiotics will be stopped within 24 hours after surgery.
- Clean the skin at the site of your surgery with a special soap that kills germs.
- Place a sterile dressing over your surgical wound after surgery.
- Perform postoperative daily CHG skin cleaning and incision care if you stay in the hospital after surgery. CHG cloths will be used for your bath and will be used to clean over non-gauze dressings. Your surgical wound area and any drains and tubes near your body will also be cleaned.

### What can I do to help prevent SSIs?

Before your surgery:

- Tell your doctor about other medical problems you may have. Health problems such as allergies, diabetes, dental problems and poor nutrition could affect your surgery and your treatment.
- Quit smoking or using electronic cigarettes (vaping) – nicotine can decrease the amount of blood, oxygen and nutrients that go to the surgical site. Patients who smoke or use electronic cigarettes get more infections. Smoking and vaping after your surgery will decrease your wound healing and increase your risk of wound infection. Talk to your doctor about how you can quit before or after your surgery.
- Do not shave with a razor with blades near where you will have surgery. Shaving with a razor with blades can irritate your skin and make it easier to develop an infection.

### At the time of your surgery:

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have not been able to complete your CHG baths or nasal decolonization at home.
- Tell staff if you feel cold, and ask for a warm blanket.

### After your surgery:

- You are welcome to ask your healthcare providers to clean their hands either with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before examining you. They may have cleaned their hands before coming into the room, but reminders can be helpful, and they would be happy to do it in front of you.
- Family and friends who visit you should not touch the surgical wound or dressings.
- Family and friends should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after visiting you. If you do not see them do that, ask them to clean their hands.

### What do I need to do when I go home from the hospital?

- Before you go home, your doctor or nurse will explain how to care for your incision.
- Make sure you understand how to care for your surgical wound and what supplies you need for dressing changes and wound cleaning. Ask your doctor when regular bathing/showering with soap and water can begin.
- Always clean your hands before and after caring for your wound.
- Before you go home, make sure you know who to contact if you have questions or problems after you get home.
- If you have any symptoms of an infection, such as redness and pain at the surgery site, drainage, swelling around the wound, wound opening or fever, call your doctor immediately.

If you have additional questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.



