

Surgical site infections cannot be completely prevented, but there's a lot you can do to help minimize the risk.

Tips to Prevent Infection

- Before your surgery, bathe or shower with an antiseptic-skin cleanser containing chlorhexidine gluconate, such as Hibiclens, by following the instructions in this brochure or the instructions provided with your product if different than Hibiclens.
- Do not shave the surgery area before surgery; if hair removal is needed, nurses caring for you will use special clippers to trim the hair.
- After surgery, wash your hands after eating and using the restroom. Ask visitors to wash their hands before touching you. Don't be too shy to ask hospital staff to wash their hands, too!
- Ask your doctor and nurses how you should care for your wound at home.
- If your surgical wound is covered, keep it dry.
- If your wound covering becomes moist or wet while in the hospital, notify your nurse or doctor right away.
- Do not apply lotions to your incision.
- Do not pick or scratch at the surgical site; if it becomes itchy, tell your doctor.
- If you are diabetic, talk to your doctor before surgery about your medications. After surgery, try to keep your blood sugar levels between 70–180 mg/DL.
- To prevent pneumonia, brush your teeth four times a day. Also use the incentive spirometer given to you in the hospital, or practice deep breathing every two hours while awake.



True or False?

Dogs and cats have healing powers when they lick your wound.

This is FALSE. Dogs and cats have high bacterial counts in their mouths. If your pet licks your wound, it can lead to an infection.



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Quick Tips to Prepare
for Surgery

Surgery, Infection Prevention and You

You play an important role in infection prevention.



Hibiclens for Skin Cleaning

Your skin is not sterile. To help remove germs before your surgery, please follow these instructions for bathing with a special soap called Hibiclens:

- Hibiclens is not to be used on the head or face. Keep out of eyes, ears, mouth and genital area.
- Use Hibiclens from the neck down only.
- Do not use Hibiclens if you are allergic to chlorhexidine gluconate.
- If you are allergic to chlorhexidine gluconate, tell your doctor and use another antibacterial soap, such as Dial, for your preoperative bathing following the same instructions.
- Read the “Drug Facts” on the bottle for more information.
- If you have any additional questions, talk to your doctor.

Instructions for Bathing Three Times with Hibiclens

Two Nights Before Surgery

- Wash your hair as usual with your regular shampoo and rinse well.
- Wash your face with regular soap or water only.
- Completely rinse your body with warm water from the neck down.
- Turn off the water to prevent rinsing the Hibiclens soap off. It needs to stay on your skin for five minutes.
- Use Hibiclens as you would any other liquid soap. Please note: one bottle is enough for three baths.
- Place a small amount of Hibiclens on the palm of your hand and apply to your skin.
- Repeat the process until all skin has been covered.
- Pay special attention to the area where surgery will be performed.
- Leave in place for five minutes, then rinse well with warm water.
- Do not use your regular soap after washing with Hibiclens and rinsing.
- Pat yourself dry with a freshly laundered towel.
- Do not apply lotion, powders or perfumes to the areas cleaned with Hibiclens.
- Wear freshly laundered pajamas.

The Night Before Surgery

Follow “Two Nights Before Surgery” bathing instructions.

Morning of Surgery

- Again, follow “Two Nights Before Surgery” bathing instructions.
- Wear freshly laundered clothes to the hospital.

Additional Infection Prevention Tips

- Quit smoking! Smokers are more likely to get infections.
- Get your flu shot (during flu season).
- Come home from your surgery to freshly laundered sheets.
- Remember, you are protecting your surgical wound. Keep your environment clean.
- Do not take baths, swim or use a hot tub until your doctor says it’s ok. Ask your doctor if you can take showers. In some cases, you may only be allowed to take sponge baths.
- Wash your hands before and after surgical dressing changes and make sure you have a clean surface to set up your supplies.
- Call your doctor immediately if you see any redness, drainage or swelling at the surgical site.