

# Preparing Your Skin before Surgery

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## *When You Can't Take a Shower*

### **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 products, you will lower the number of germs on your skin. This decreases your chance of infection.

### **Special wipes**

Buy or get a package of antiseptic surgical wipes with CHG (for example, Sage Cloths).

You can find the wipes at any Fairview pharmacy. If you don't live near a Fairview pharmacy, ask your care team to help you find the wipes.

### **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.

### **Follow these instructions:**

#### ***The evening before surgery***

1. Clean your skin as able by taking a bath or sponge bath with soap and water. Shampoo your hair if you can.
2. Dry your body well using a clean, fresh towel.
3. Using clean hands, follow steps 1 through 6 on the next page to gently wipe your body with a back and forth motion. Do not scrub. Do not use cloths on your face or near eyes or ears. Do not use on broken skin or open wounds.
4. Let each area air dry for one minute. Do not rinse or towel off.
5. It is normal for your skin to feel somewhat sticky for a few minutes after using the wipes. Do not use any lotions, creams or moisturizers. Do not use makeup, hair spray or other products in your hair. Do not wash after using the wipes.
6. Dress in freshly washed clothes or pajamas. Use fresh pillowcases and sheets on your bed.

#### ***The morning of surgery***

Repeat steps 3 and 4.

*(over)*

## Where to wipe

Use a fresh cloth for each body area listed below.

1. Wipe your neck, chest and belly.
2. Wipe both arms, starting with the shoulder and ending at fingertips. Be sure to wipe the arm pit areas really well.
3. Wipe both legs, starting at the thigh and ending at the toes. Be sure to wipe well behind your knees. Avoid any open wounds.
4. Wipe your back, starting at the base of your neck to your waist line. You may need someone to help you with this step.
5. Wipe both hips, then your groin. Be sure to wipe folds in the groin area.
6. Wipe your buttocks.

