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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Chlorhexidine Gluconate (Topical)

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Antiseptic Skin Cleanser [OTC] [DSC]; Betasept Surgical Scrub [OTC]; ChloraPrep One Step [OTC] [DSC]; Dyna-Hex 2 [OTC]; Dyna-Hex 4 [OTC]; Hibiclens [OTC]; Tegaderm CHG Dressing [OTC]

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to clean the skin to prevent infection.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Protect clothing and fabrics from staining.
- Some products are used to clean wounds. Some products must not be put on open skin wounds. Be sure you know how to use this drug.
- Some of these drugs may catch on fire. Do not use near an open flame or while smoking.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.
- Use with care in children younger than 2 months old. Talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Skin irritation.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Dryness.

- Itching.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch>.

## **How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **For all uses of this drug:**

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your skin only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, ears, and eyes (may burn).
- This drug may cause very bad and long-lasting eye problems if put in the eye. If you have a perforated eardrum and this drug gets in the ear, it could cause hearing loss.
- If you get this drug in any of these areas, rinse well with water.
- Do not put on the genitals.

### **Skin (hand sanitizer):**

- Work under fingertips.
- Spread over hand and to just above elbow.
- Put 1 more pumpful on both hands and spread over hands and up to the wrists.
- Rub into hands until dry.

### **Skin (hand washing):**

- Wet hands and forearms.

- Put 1 teaspoon (5 mL) on hands and wash for 1 minute.
- Rinse affected part with water. Make sure to dry well.

### **Skin (before surgery or other procedures):**

- Your doctor may teach you how to use.

### **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- If you use this drug on a regular basis, use a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not use 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Many times this drug is used on an as needed basis. Do not use more often than told by the doctor.

### **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Protect from heat or open flame.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

### **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly.  
If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM,  
during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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