Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Shower Using 4% Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) Solution Antiseptic Skin Cleanser

This information explains how to shower using 4% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) solution.

CHG solution is a skin cleanser that keeps working after you use it.

CHG is a strong antiseptic (liquid used to kill germs and bacteria). You can buy CHG solution at your local pharmacy or online.

Showering with 4% CHG solution helps lower your risk of infection. You may need to use 4% CHG solution:

- Every day while your central venous catheter (CVC) is in place.
- Before your surgery or procedure.
- After your surgery or procedure.
- If you're in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).
- If you're getting a stem cell transplant.
- If you have a blood or lymphatic system cancer (such as leukemia, lymphoma, or myeloma).
- Do not use 4% CHG solution if you're allergic to CHG or any other ingredients.
- Do not use 4% CHG solution on children who are younger than 2 months old.
- If you have irritation or an allergic reaction when using 4% CHG solution,

stop using it and call your doctor or Poison Control (800-222-1222).

How to use 4% CHG solution

1. Wash your hair with your usual shampoo and conditioner. Rinse your head well.
2. Wash your face and genital (groin) area with your usual soap. Rinse your body well with warm water.
3. Open the 4% CHG solution bottle. Pour some into your hand or a clean washcloth. Do not dilute (mix) the CHG solution with water before doing this.
4. Move away from the shower stream to avoid rinsing off the CHG solution too soon.
5. Rub the 4% CHG solution gently over your body from your neck to your feet. Do not put the CHG solution on:
    - Your head or face (including your eyes, ears, and mouth).
    - Your genital area.
    - Wounds or scrapes that are deeper than the top layer of skin. If you have a wound and aren't sure if you should use 4% CHG solution, ask your healthcare provider.
6. Move back into the shower stream to rinse off the 4% CHG solution. Use warm water.
7. Dry yourself off with a clean towel.

Using other products along with 4% CHG solution

Do not put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, perfume, or cologne after your shower. Many products can keep the CHG solution from working.

Do not use regular soap after applying and rinsing with 4% CHG solution.

If you're in the hospital, your nurse can give you a lotion that you can use after showering with CHG solution.

If you're not in the hospital, only use products that say "chlorhexidine compatible" on the label. If you're not sure, you can contact the company to ask.

What to do if you get 4% CHG solution in your eye

- Do not rub your eye.
- Rinse your eye with lots of room temperature water right away. Keep your eye wide open while you're rinsing. If you're wearing a contact lens, take it out, if you can. Keep rinsing for 15 to 20 minutes.
- If your eye is still irritated after 1 hour, go to an urgent care center or the emergency room.

What to do if you get 4% CHG solution in your mouth

- Rinse your mouth with water right away.
- Do not make yourself vomit (throw up).
- If you swallowed any 4% CHG solution, get medical help or contact Poison Control right away.

What to do if you get 4% CHG solution in your ear

- Rinse your ear with water right away.

Do not rub 4% CHG in sensitive parts of your body, such as your genitals.

For more information, read the product label on the outside of the 4% CHG solution package.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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