Daily Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) Treatment

What is Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) soap?
CHG soap (Hibiclens®) is used to reduce the numbers of germs on your skin. This soap is very good because it kills germs on your skin for a longer time than other soaps and it works when other body fluids such as blood are present.

Why is using CHG soap (Hibiclens®) important?
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 out of every 20 patients will get an infection while they are in the hospital. These infections are called hospital acquired infections (HAIs). In 2002, the number of HAIs in the U.S. was about 1.7 million.

Studies show that your chance of getting an HAI is lower when the number of germs on your skin is lower. Reducing the chance of getting an HAI is important because HAIs lead to longer hospital stays and increased costs.

Can CHG soap (Hibiclens®) cause skin problems?
Yes, it can. Some of the common side effects of cleaning skin with CHG soap (Hibiclens®) are itchiness, redness, and irritation of the skin. These side effects often go away quickly. If you have any skin irritation (skin that is red, itchy, or burns), rinse the CHG soap (Hibiclens®) off your skin and let your nurse know right away.

Does CHG soap (Hibiclens®) hurt metal jewelry or jewelry stones?
No. There is no data to show that CHG soap (Hibiclens®) hurts metal jewelry or jewelry stones.

How do I use CHG soap (Hibiclens®)?
- If you have any open skin areas, check with a nurse before using CHG soap (Hibiclens®) to shower.
- Wash your hair using regular shampoo. Then rinse your hair.
- Wash your face using the Aloe Vesta® 3 in 1 Foam or Johnson and Johnson Bathing Wash.
- Use CHG soap (Hibiclens®) like you would use a liquid soap. Put this CHG soap (Hibiclens®) directly on your skin and wash gently.
- Rinse well with warm water.
- Do not use your regular soap after you use the CHG soap (Hibiclens®).
- Dry your skin with a towel.
- It is recommended you use a lotion after bathing with CHG. Use a lotion provided by the hospital so that it works well with the CHG soap. Aloe Vesta®, Cetaphil®, or Aquaphor®.

If severe skin irritation (red and very dry skin) occurs, stop daily CHG bathing and let your nurse know right away.
Can I use lotion after I use CHG soap (Hibiclens®)?
Yes. You can use a lotion after you bathe with CHG soap if you use a lotion approved by the hospital that works well with CHG. Aloe Vesta® lotion is a good one to use. Most over-the-counter lotions are not okay to use with CHG. Please use only hospital approved lotions while you are in the hospital.

How can I help prevent the spread of germs?
• Talk with your nurse about what you need to do to prevent the spread of germs.
• Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when you sneeze or cough. If you use a tissue or your hands, clean your hands when you are done.
• Clean your hands before you leave your room and when you return.
• Bathe daily and change into clean clothing. If you cannot bathe yourself, staff will help you.
• Put on a clean robe (may use a second gown worn like a robe) before you leave your room. Keep the robe on while outside your room.
• Avoid contact with other patients.

What about when I go home?
Most of the time, CHG is not needed at home. However, sometimes patients do need to bathe daily at home with CHG soap (Hibiclens®). Your doctor or nurse will tell you if you need to use CHG at home.

The Spanish version of this Health Facts for You is # 7431.