

Preparing Your Skin Before Hip or Knee Replacement Surgery

Barnes-Jewish Hospital and
Washington University Physicians

The purpose of preparing your skin before surgery is to ensure that your skin is thoroughly cleansed to reduce the amount of bacteria that is normally found on the skin. This helps to lower your risk of developing a surgical site infection. If you have any further questions or experience skin irritation, please call an orthopedic clinical specialist from Barnes-Jewish Hospital at (314) 362-4468.



Decolonization Therapy

Getting rid of MRSA is called “decolonization.” Decolonization helps decrease the amount of germs on your body and it may help avoid infections after surgery.

Germs can live in your nose and on your skin. There are two parts that decolonization therapy focuses on:

1. Rub ointment into each of your nostrils (the inside of your nose) twice a day for 5 days.
2. Take a shower with a special soap called Scrub Care once a day for 6 days.

TASK	DATE	NOTES
Start your nasal and skin care therapy 5 days before surgery		
Finish the nasal ointment 1 day before surgery		
In the morning, on the day of surgery, take your last shower using Scrub Care.		

Orthopedics



NATIONAL LEADERS IN MEDICINE

How to use the nasal ointment (mupirocin 2%)

Do not put any medicine on the outside of your nose during these 5 days. Do not put any sprays or other medicines in your nose during these 5 days.

You will get a prescription for your ointment. It may come in small, single use tubes or in one larger tube.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds before you use your ointment.
2. Tilt your head back. Use a cotton swab to put the ointment inside each nostril:
 - If you have the small tubes, use half of a tube inside each nostril each time. Throw away the small tube and use a new one next time.

- If you have the large tube, use a pea-sized amount of ointment inside each nostril each time. Save the large tube and use it each time.

3. Press your nostrils together and rub for about one minute.
4. Do not get the ointment near your eyes. If any of it gets into your eyes, rinse them well with cool water.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds as soon as you are finished.



How to use the Scrub Care soap (4% chlorhexidine)

On the first day of therapy, put clean sheets on your bed. Wear clean pajamas each night, clean clothes each day. Remove nail coverings, artificial nails and nail polish.

Your soap may come in one large or several small bottles.

1. First, shampoo and rinse your hair with your own shampoo. Do this so the Scrub Care soap isn't washed off by your shampoo.
2. Use about ¼ cup of soap for each shower or bath.
3. Use a clean washcloth to apply the Scrub Care to all areas:
 - Avoid your face. Keep out of your eyes, ears and mouth.
 - Make sure to wash your arms and armpits, behind your ears, your legs and behind your knees, your feet, your groin area, and between or under any skin folds.

- The soap will not bubble or lather very much. That is OK.

If you get the soap in your eyes, ears or mouth – rinse well with cool water.

4. When finished, step out of the water and leave the soap on your skin for 2 minutes before rinsing.
5. Rinse the Scrub Care off your skin thoroughly. Do not wash with any other soap or cleanser.
6. Dry off with a clean towel and put on clean clothes.
7. You can use lotion for dry skin on the days before surgery. Do not use lotion on the morning of your surgery.
8. You can shave on the days before surgery. Do not shave on the morning of your surgery.

To speak with an orthopedic clinical specialist from Barnes-Jewish Hospital, call (314) 362-4468.

For more information, visit us at BarnesJewish.org or ortho.wustl.edu

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