

Chlorhexidine

MYTHS BUSTED

Myth: All patients need a chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) bath.

Truth: Only certain patients should get CHG baths.

WHY NOT?

- Does every sick patient receive antibiotics? **NO**, because it may cause antibiotic resistance. Inappropriate overuse could create CHG resistance.

WHAT BATHS SHOULD PATIENTS GET?

- Soap and Water or Bath Wipes:** ALL patients receive a daily bath, including pericare with soap and water (provided by the hospital) or bath wipes.
 - Use Soap and water or bath wipes for patients who are incontinent or visibly dirty.
- CHG:** Daily CHG baths are added after regular baths and pericare for specific patients to reduce microbial load.
 - All patients in the ICU
 - Patients outside the ICU with central lines (PICC, Ports, Dialysis Catheter, etc.) and midlines

Myth: Daily CHG Baths help prevent both CLABSI and CAUTI.

Truth: Daily CHG baths are only proven to prevent CLABSI.

- There is no evidence that CHG baths prevent CAUTIs. Patients outside of the ICU with indwelling urinary devices (ex. Foleys) but **no central lines/midlines should not receive** routine CHG baths or wipe down the Foley with CHG.

Myth: CHG is not safe for the perineal area.

Truth: CHG **IS** safe for use on the perineal area.

- For patients who are receiving CHG baths in addition to daily baths: use according to the package instructions, which includes application on the perineal area.
- CHG Should NOT be used on:**
 - Open/broken skin • Eyes • Ears • Mouth**
 - Avoid these areas the same way you do during a regular bath.

References: Frost, I., Van Boeckel, T. P., Pires, J., Craig, J., Laxminarayan, R., & Kishore, S. P. (2018). Evidence for the effectiveness of chlorhexidine bathing and health care-associated infections among adult intensive care patients: A trial sequential meta-analysis. *BMC Infectious Diseases*, 18(1), 679. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12879-018-3521-y>

Stryker. (2021). *Antibacterial body cleansing washcloths with 2% chlorhexidine gluconate: Instructions for use* (REF 9602 ANZ).

[CHG Wipes Product Specification Sheet.pdf](#)

Ebel, S., (2024) Performing Perineal Care. Dynamic Health. Retrieved May 26, 2025 from <https://www.dynahealth.com/nursing-skills/performing-perineal-care>



Instructions for Caregivers

Daily CHG Bathing – HOW TO

CHG (Chlorhexidine Gluconate) is a special antiseptic that kills germs and helps prevent infections.

Staff give **daily** CHG baths **after** regular baths for specific patients:

- All patients in the ICU
- Patients outside the ICU with **central lines** (PICC, Ports, Dialysis Catheter, etc.) **and midlines**



Cloths are to be thrown in the trash, Do NOT flush!



CHG Bathing: Always wash the **cleanest areas first** and move toward areas with more sweat or bacteria.

Cloth 1

Clean the **face**, then the **neck (front and back)**, and finally the **chest**.
Avoid the eyes, mouth, and ears.



Cloth 2

Start with the **hands**, clean **between fingers**, then move up the **arms** to the **shoulders**, ending with the **armpits**.



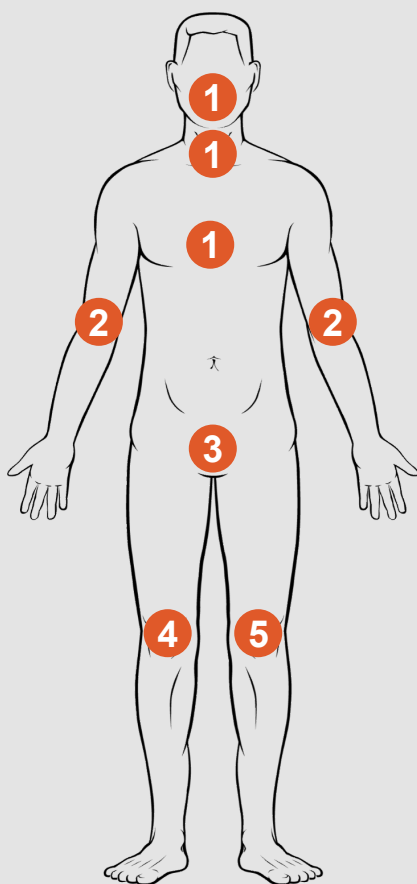
Cloth 3

Clean the **abdomen**, then the **groin**, and finish with the **perineum**.



Cloth 4

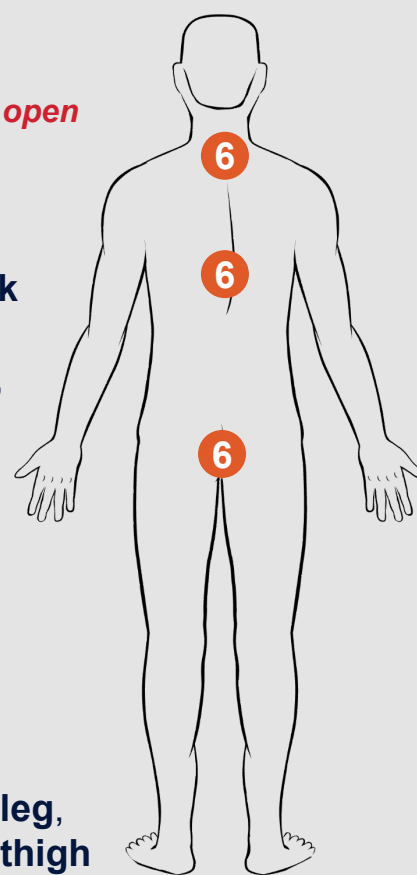
Clean the **right leg**, starting at the **thigh** and moving down to the **foot**, including **between the toes**.



Do NOT use on open or broken skin.

Cloth 6

Clean the **back of the neck**, then the **back**, and finish with the **buttocks**.



Cloth 5

Clean the **left leg**, starting at the **thigh** and moving down to the **foot**, including **between the toes**.

Use all **6 cloths** (use more if needed). Use firm massage to ensure deep cleaning.

If skin is visibly dirty, clean with soap and water or bath wipes first, then reapply CHG.

If there are any tubes, lines, or drains, clean them starting **where they come out of the body** and wipe **6 inches outward** along the tube (use new cloth if necessary).

Daily CHG Bathing – TALKING POINTS



What the caregiver needs to know:

- ✓ **CHG (Chlorhexidine Gluconate)** baths are in addition to daily bathing.
- ✓ **Gentle on skin:** CHG wipes contain aloe and are less drying than soap.
- ✓ **Do not rinse off:** CHG keeps working for 24 hours to protect against germs. CHG **kills more germs** than regular soap and water.
- ✓ Only use **hospital provided soaps/shampoo** for regular daily bathing - they are compatible with CHG.
- ✓ **Perineal area:** CHG wipes are safe to use, but not for cleaning visible soiling; use bath wipes or soap first.
- ✓ **Tubes, lines, and drains:** Clean 6 inches out from where they enter the body, starting at the skin and moving outward. It's safe to clean over non-absorbable dressings
- ✓ All patients in the Intensive Care Unit, or patients who have a **central line catheter** (PICC, Port, Dialysis Catheter, etc.) **or midline** outside the ICU, will receive daily CHG baths.

Avoid eyes, ears, and mouth.



Do NOT use on open / broken skin.



**Cloths are to be thrown in the trash,
Do NOT flush!**



"Ugh! I don't like those.
My skin is sticky."

"I know it isn't your favorite, but the stickiness is actually a good thing. It's due to the aloe in the cloths which moisturizes your skin while it cleans. It should go away after a few minutes."

"I already had my bath/shower."

"That's right! You'll get your regular bath first with compatible hospital soap or wipes, then a CHG bath. While you're in the hospital, CHG baths are actually a treatment. The wipes remove harmful germs and protect you better than soap and water."

"I'm too tired and don't feel like it today."

"I understand you must be tired, but getting this bath every day is important to protect you from bacteria and germs. It will only take 5-10 minutes and I will help you. If you are too tired right now, I can come back later today and check in with you."

"I feel bad you have to bathe me."

"It's our privilege to care for you. If you'd like to bathe yourself, I'll stay to assist and guide you. You're welcome to wash your private areas, and I'll help with harder-to-reach spots like your feet or back. Let me know if you have any questions or need more help at any time."