
Surgical site infections:
prevention and treatment
(NG125)

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PULSE

Nursing
IN PRACTICE

Surgical site infections: prevention and treatment

Introduction

This guideline covers preventing and treating surgical site infections in adults, young people and children who are having a surgical procedure involving a cut through the skin.

Information for patients and carers

- Offer patients and carers clear, consistent information and advice throughout all stages of their care. This should include the risks of surgical site infections, what is being done to reduce them and how they are managed. For more guidance on providing information to adults and discussing their preferences with them, see the NICE guideline on patient experience in adult NHS services.
 - Offer patients and carers information and advice on how to care for their wound after discharge.
 - Offer patients and carers information and advice about how to recognise a surgical site infection and who to contact if they are concerned. Use an integrated care pathway for healthcare-associated infections to help communicate this information to both patients and all those involved in their care after discharge.
- Always inform patients after their operation if they have been given antibiotics.

Preoperative phase

Preoperative showering

- Advise patients to shower or have a bath (or help patients to shower, bath or bed bath) using soap, either the day before, or on the day of, surgery

Nasal decolonisation

- Consider nasal mupirocin in combination

with a chlorhexidine body wash before procedures in which *Staphylococcus aureus* is a likely cause of a surgical site infection. This should be locally determined and take into account:

- the type of procedure
- individual patient risk factors
- the increased risk of side effects in preterm infants
- the potential impact of infection.
- Maintain surveillance on antimicrobial resistance associated with the use of mupirocin. For information on antimicrobial stewardship programmes, see the NICE guideline on antimicrobial stewardship: systems and processes for effective antimicrobial medicine use.

Hair removal

- Do not use hair removal routinely to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.
- If hair has to be removed, use electric clippers with a single-use head on the day of surgery. Do not use razors for hair removal, because they increase the risk of surgical site infection.

Patient theatre wear

- Give patients specific theatre wear that is appropriate for the procedure and clinical setting, and that provides easy access to the operative site and areas for placing devices, such as intravenous cannulas. Take into account the patient's comfort and dignity.

Staff theatre wear

- All staff should wear specific non-sterile theatre wear in all areas where operations are undertaken.

Staff leaving the operating area

- Staff wearing non-sterile theatre wear should keep their movements in and out of the operating area to a minimum.

Mechanical bowel preparation

- Do not use mechanical bowel preparation routinely to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.

Hand jewellery, artificial nails and nail polish

- The operating team should remove hand jewellery before operations.
- The operating team should remove artificial nails and nail polish before operations.

Antibiotic prophylaxis

- Give antibiotic prophylaxis to patients before:
 - clean surgery involving the placement of a prosthesis or implant
 - clean-contaminated surgery
 - contaminated surgery
- Do not use antibiotic prophylaxis routinely for clean non-prosthetic uncomplicated surgery.
- Use the local antibiotic formulary and always take into account the potential adverse effects when choosing specific antibiotics for prophylaxis.
- Consider giving a single dose of antibiotic prophylaxis intravenously on starting anaesthesia. However, give prophylaxis earlier for operations in which a tourniquet is used.
- Before giving antibiotic prophylaxis, take into account the timing and pharmacokinetics (for example, the serum half-life) and necessary infusion time of the antibiotic. Give a repeat dose of antibiotic

prophylaxis when the operation is longer than the half-life of the antibiotic given.

- Give antibiotic treatment (in addition to prophylaxis) to patients having surgery on a dirty or infected wound.
- Inform patients before the operation, whenever possible, if they will need antibiotic prophylaxis, and afterwards if they have been given antibiotics during their operation.

Intraoperative phase**Hand decontamination**

- The operating team should wash their hands prior to the first operation on the list using an aqueous antiseptic surgical solution, with a single-use brush or pick for the nails, and ensure that hands and nails are visibly clean.
- Before subsequent operations, hands should be washed using either an alcoholic hand rub or an antiseptic surgical solution. If hands are soiled then they should be washed again with an antiseptic surgical solution.

Incise drapes

- Do not use non-iodophor-impregnated incise drapes routinely for surgery as they may increase the risk of surgical site infection.
- If an incise drape is required, use an iodophor-impregnated drape unless the patient has an iodine allergy.

Sterile gowns

- The operating team should wear sterile gowns in the operating theatre during the operation.

Gloves

- Consider wearing 2 pairs of sterile gloves when there is a high risk of glove perforation and the consequences of contamination may be serious.

**Antiseptic skin preparation**

- Prepare the skin at the surgical site immediately before incision using an antiseptic preparation.
- Be aware of the risks of using skin antiseptics in babies, in particular the risk of severe chemical injuries with the use of chlorhexidine (both alcohol-based and aqueous solutions) in preterm babies.
- When deciding which antiseptic skin preparation to use, options may include those in the table below.

Diathermy

- If diathermy is to be carried out: use evaporation to dry antiseptic skin preparations and avoid pooling of alcohol-based preparations.
- Do not use diathermy for surgical incision to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.

Maintaining patient homeostasis

- Maintain patient temperature in line with NICE's guideline on hypothermia: prevention and management in adults having surgery.
- Maintain optimal oxygenation during surgery. In particular, give patients sufficient oxygen during major surgery and in the recovery period to ensure that a haemoglobin saturation of more than 95% is maintained.
- Maintain adequate perfusion during surgery.
- Do not give insulin routinely to patients who do not have diabetes to optimise blood glucose postoperatively as a means of reducing the risk of surgical site infection.

Wound irrigation and intracavity lavage

- Do not use wound irrigation to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.
- Do not use intracavity lavage to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.

Antiseptics and antibiotics before wound closure

- Only apply an antiseptic or antibiotic to the wound before closure as part of a clinical research trial.
- Consider using gentamicin-collagen implants in cardiac surgery.

Closure methods

- When using sutures, consider using antimicrobial triclosan-coated sutures, especially for paediatric surgery, to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.

Table 1
When**Choice of antiseptic skin preparation**

First choice unless contraindicated or the surgical site is next to a mucous membrane	Alcohol-based solution of chlorhexidine
If the surgical site is next to a mucous membrane	Aqueous solution of chlorhexidine
If chlorhexidine is contraindicated	Alcohol-based solution of povidone-iodine
If both an alcohol-based solution and chlorhexidine are unsuitable	Aqueous solution of povidoneiodine

- Consider using sutures rather than staples to close the skin after caesarean section to reduce the risk of superficial wound dehiscence

Wound dressings

- Cover surgical incisions with an appropriate interactive dressing at the end of the operation.

Postoperative phase

Changing dressings

- Use an aseptic non-touch technique for changing or removing surgical wound dressings.

Postoperative cleansing

- Use sterile saline for wound cleansing up to 48 hours after surgery.
- Advise patients that they may shower safely 48 hours after surgery.
- Use tap water for wound cleansing after 48 hours if the surgical wound has separated or has been surgically opened to drain pus.

Topical antimicrobial agents for wound healing by primary intention

- Do not use topical antimicrobial agents for surgical wounds that are healing by primary intention to reduce the risk of surgical site infection.

Dressings for wound healing by secondary intention

- Do not use Eusol and gauze, or moist cotton gauze or mercuric antiseptic solutions to manage surgical wounds that are healing by secondary intention.
- Use an appropriate interactive dressing to manage surgical wounds that are healing by secondary intention.
- Ask a tissue viability nurse (or another healthcare professional with tissue viability expertise) for advice on appropriate dressings for the management of surgical wounds that are healing by secondary intention.

Antibiotic treatment of surgical site infection and treatment failure

- When surgical site infection is suspected by the presence of cellulitis, either by a new infection or an infection caused by treatment failure, give the patient an antibiotic that covers the likely causative organisms. Consider local resistance patterns and the results of microbiological tests in choosing an antibiotic. For information on antimicrobial stewardship programmes see the NICE guideline on antimicrobial stewardship: systems and processes for effective antimicrobial medicine use.

Debridement

- Do not use Eusol and gauze, or dextranomer or enzymatic treatments for debridement in the management of surgical site infection.

Specialist wound care services

- Use a structured approach to care to improve overall management of surgical wounds. This should include preoperative assessments to identify people with potential wound healing problems. Enhanced education of healthcare workers, patients and carers, and sharing of clinical expertise is needed to support this.

Not all 2% CHG / 70% IPA solutions are the same

Only ChloroPrep™ is licensed

The MHRA requires products used for cutaneous antiseptics prior to invasive procedures to have a licence¹

Companies or manufacturers selling CHG products without marketing authorisation are in breach of regulatory requirements²

ChloroPrep is the only 2% CHG / 70% IPA system licensed by the FDA and MHRA^{3,4}

Because of this, ChloroPrep trial data have not only been scrutinised, but the system has a well-defined product safety monitoring and response process

Only ChloroPrep is sterile for each patient use

Despite their pharmacological activity, bulk antiseptic products can be contaminated with microbial organisms, posing a significant threat to patient health⁵

There have been published reports linking outbreaks of infection to antiseptic products from all commonly used antiseptic categories, including alcohol, iodophors and CHG⁶

Topical antiseptics should be considered a source of postoperative or postinjection infection⁶

Only ChloroPrep has an applicator designed for purpose

The method of application plays an important role in skin antiseptics⁷

Good antiseptics are more likely to occur with convenient products – as offered by the selection of single-use applicators⁸

While concentric prepping ensures the skin has been painted with a disinfecting solution, moving gently back and forth over the same area will remove the greater part of the bacterial load that resides in the stratum corneum⁸

A back and forth prep was used in all the phase III efficacy studies of ChloroPrep applicators⁹

Prescribing Information

ChloroPrep® & ChloroPrep with Tint 2% chlorhexidine gluconate w/v / 70% isopropyl alcohol v/v cutaneous solution. Refer to the Summary of Product Characteristics before prescribing. **Presentation:** ChloroPrep – each applicator contains 0.67ml, 1.5ml, 3ml, 10.5ml or 26ml of 20 mg/ml chlorhexidine & 0.70 ml/ml isopropyl alcohol; ChloroPrep with Tint – each applicator contains 3ml, 10.5ml or 26ml of 20 mg/ml chlorhexidine & 0.70 ml/ml isopropyl alcohol. **Indication:** Disinfection of skin prior to invasive medical procedures. **Dosage & administration:** Applicator volume dependent on invasive procedure being undertaken. May be used for all age groups and patient populations. Use with care in newborn babies and those born prematurely. Applicator squeezed to break ampoule and release antiseptic solution onto sponge. Solution applied by gently pressing sponge against skin and moving back and forth for 30 seconds. The area covered should be allowed to air dry. **Contra-indications:** Patients with known hypersensitivity to ChloroPrep or ChloroPrep with Tint or any of its components, especially those with a history of possible Chlorhexidine-related allergic reactions. **Warnings and precautions:** Solution is flammable. Do not use with ignition sources until dry. Do not use in excessive quantities, allow to pool in patient skin folds or drip on materials in contact with patient skin. Remove any soaked materials before proceeding with the intervention. Ensure no excess product is present prior to application of occlusive dressing. For external use only on intact skin, do not use on open skin wounds or broken or damaged skin. Over-vigorous use on fragile or sensitive skin or repeated use may lead to local skin reactions. Avoid prolonged skin contact. Avoid contact with eyes, mucous membranes, middle ear and neural tissue. Chlorhexidine may induce hypersensitivity, including generalised allergic reactions and anaphylactic shock. May cause chemical burns in neonates, with a higher risk in preterm infants and within the first 2 weeks of life. **Pregnancy & lactation:** Although no studies have been conducted, no effects are anticipated as systemic exposure is negligible. **Undesirable effects:** Very rare; allergic or irritation skin reactions to chlorhexidine, isopropyl alcohol or sunset yellow (E110, present in ChloroPrep with Tint only), including erythema, rash, pruritus and blisters or application site vesicles, other local symptoms have included skin burning sensation, pain and inflammation. **Frequency not known;** hypersensitivity including anaphylactic shock, dermatitis, eczema, urticaria, chemical burns in neonates. Discontinue use at the first sign of local skin reaction. **Per applicator costs (ex VAT)** ChloroPrep: 0.67ml (SEPP) – 30p; 1.5ml (FREPP) – 55p; 1.5ml – 78p; 3ml – 85p; 10.5ml – £2.92; 26ml – £6.50. ChloroPrep with Tint: 3ml – 89p; 10.5ml – £3.07; 26ml – £6.83. **Legal category:** GSL. Marketing Authorisation Numbers: ChloroPrep, PL31760/0004 & ChloroPrep with Tint, PL31760-0001. **Marketing Authorisation Holder:** CareFusion UK 244 Ltd, The Crescent, Jays Close, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG22 4BS. **Date of Preparation:** February 2016.

Reporting suspected adverse reactions is important to monitor the benefit/risk balance of the medicinal product. Reporting forms and information can be found at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard. Adverse events should also be reported to CareFusion Freephone number: 0800 0437 546 or email: CareFusionGB@professionalinformation.co.uk

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ChloraPrep™: setting a new standard in operating procedures

1 STERILE 2% CHG / 70% IPA SOLUTION

- Manufactured sterile from the inside out, the solution (terminally sterilised post ampoulsation) is maintained in a glass ampoule prior to activation
- Sterile dye is introduced upon activation

2 STERILE APPLICATOR

- Designed to facilitate proven back and forth application technique, whilst maintaining user asepsis (ANTT®)
- With everything contained in a single unit, there is only one thing to open and throw away, helping protect the sterile operating field

3 STERILE SPONGE

- Polyester urethane sponge does not chemically interact with the solution
- Designed for comfort, with minimal dermal abrasion
- Helps to regulate flow, preventing splashing or pooling during application, which mitigates the risk of chemical and thermal burns

ONLY 2% CHG / 70% IPA
IN THE CHLORAPREP
APPLICATOR HAS BEEN
PROVEN TO CUT SSIs
BY 41%^{1*}



MITIGATING FIRE RISKS

The most common source of surgical fire is from the presence of flammable skin antiseptic²

On the basis of evidence, Public Health England's Rapid Review Panel gave ChloraPrep its highest recommendation (Recommendation 1)³

*Compared with povidone iodine
ANTT®: aseptic non-touch technique; CHG: chlorhexidine gluconate; IPA: isopropyl alcohol

"Alcohol-based skin preparation solutions should be applied using a purpose-built applicator that ... minimizes pooling and excess application of solution"²

Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 2012

View the ChloraPrep range at www.bd.com

References:

1. Darouiche R et al. *N Engl J Med* 2010; 362(1): 18-26. 2. Rocos B, Donaldson LJ. *Ann R Coll Surg Engl* 2012; 94(2): 87-9. 3. www.hpa.org.uk (Last accessed 01 July 2016).

0000CF02937 Issue 3

Date of preparation: May 2019

Prescribing information can be found overleaf

