

Why do I need to wash my child before surgery?

Carefully washing your child with soap helps you reduce the number of germs on their skin. Cleaner skin means fewer infections after surgery. Your child will also be washed by the hospital staff just before going into surgery. Use your usual home soap to wash your child before surgery. Because your child has special skin care needs, it is not safe to use the special pre-op wash cloths that we give families. **Your child should not shave any body hair before surgery as this can also increase the chance of infection.**

How do I do a pre-op wash with my usual soap?

1. Washing needs to be done the on the night before the surgery.
2. All jewelry must be removed such as earrings, necklaces and bracelets. It needs to stay off until after the surgery. Talk with the nurse if you are worried about taking any jewelry off for cultural or religious reasons.
3. Clean and trim your child's fingernails and toenails. Take off any nail polish.
4. Wash your child's hair first with your usual soap.
5. Wet your child's skin.
6. Lather the soap over all of your child's body.
7. Rinse all of the soap off with warm water. Dry your child with a clean towel.
8. Do not use any baby oil or lotions. These products may attract dirt to the skin.
9. Dress your child in clean, washed pajamas.
10. Wash any comfort items such as a blanket or stuffed toy that may be coming along with your child to the hospital.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or the clinic that scheduled the surgery if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Cold or illness symptoms the night before or the morning of surgery. This includes things like a runny nose, fever, cough or rashes.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.