

Skin antisepsis

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Skin antisepsis removes transient organisms and dirt, thereby preventing SSI. The principles involved in skin antisepsis are as follows. The use of alcohol-based antiseptic solution is recommended. The World Health Organization recommends the use of chlorhexidine alcohol; however, the clinical difference between povidone-iodine and chlorhexidine is marginal and therefore the use of any alcohol-based antiseptic solution is acceptable. Extensions of the main incision, additional incisions and drain placement have to be factored in when planning the preparation of the surgical site. A slender cotton-tipped swab can be used to clean the umbilicus when preparing for an abdominal procedure. In contaminated or dirty wounds it is advisable to start from an area of lower bacterial contamination and move towards a region with greater contamination. However, in clean procedures, starting from the area where skin incision is likely to be made and working towards the periphery is advised. Using concentric circles, horizontal or vertical lines do not make a difference in preventing SSI. It is important to allow the antiseptic solution to dry and to avoid dripping of the solution onto the diathermy electrodes or pooling under the patient. Skin antisepsis

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