



Infection and Prevention

Dangerous bacteria can live undetected on areas of the body without causing symptoms until there are openings or breaks in the skin. There are more breaks in the skin in patients with eczema or chronic sores/ wounds. To eradicate these bacteria and decolonize the skin, we can use a combination of antibacterial baths and antibiotic ointments in high risk places.

For individual lesions or wounds:

Vinegar/ Water soaks:

- Mix two tablespoons white vinegar in two cups water. This can be kept in the refrigerator for several weeks.
- Dip a new, clean cotton ball or Q-tip into this solution. Wash your wound gently with the cotton swab, starting in the middle of the wound. Do not place the used cotton swab back in the solution.
- Apply Polysporin, Vaseline, or Aquaphor (available over the counter) to the wound.
- Cover with a bandage if the wound is fresh, or has sutures.
- Repeat these steps **two** times a day for two weeks. After two weeks, repeat these steps **once** a day until you are completely healed. This can take one to six weeks depending on the size and location of your wound.

For total body or large areas:

___ Vinegar/ Water baths: Add two cups of white vinegar to a full tub* (one cup to a half tub).

___ Bleach baths: Add ½ cup of bleach to a full tub (a ¼ cup to a half tub, 2 tablespoons to a baby tub or 4 gallons). Use Regular or "unconcentrated" bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite).

*Full tub ~40 gallons, Half tub ~20 gallons

- Soak neck down in tub for 10-20 minutes and use a white cotton cloth to cleanse the body. Make sure you cleanse your armpits, belly button and perianal area.
- Your face can be cleansed with the washcloth but do not submerge face and avoid contact with the eyes.
- After your bath, you may rinse and with gentle soap. (Vanicream, Cetaphil, CeraVe)
- After patting dry, apply Polysporin, Vaseline, or Aquaphor (available over the counter) to the open skin, or if your doctor has prescribed an antibiotic ointment, use that.
- Then, apply a thick layer of moisturizing cream to the entire body (Vanicream, Cetaphil, CeraVe) as vinegar and bleach will dry out your skin and damage your barrier to bacteria, other infectious agents, and irritants.

___ Repeat this ___ times a week, for ___ weeks.

___ Repeat this every night for one week ever month (i.e. the first seven days of the month).

___ Do this every other day when your skin condition is flaring for 1-2 weeks.

Complete decolonization:

Your doctor has recommended additional antibacterial ointment (Mupirocin – a prescription – Polysporin, Bacitracin) that should be applied to the following areas using a separate cotton swab for each area:

- Inside nostrils, underarms, bellybutton, perianal area
- This should be done 2 times per day for ___ weeks – you should be doing the decolonizing baths (described above) during this same time period