

Eliminating Staph from your skin:

Staph bacteria (staphylococcus aureus) are normally found on the skin or in the nose of about one-third of the population. If you have staph on your skin or in your nose but aren't sick, you are said to be "colonized" but not infected with staph. Healthy people can be colonized with staph and have no ill effects. However, they can pass the germ to others.

Staph bacteria are generally harmless unless they enter the body through a wound or a disrupted hair follicle. When a hair follicle becomes infected it can cause a "boil" (a giant pustule) or folliculitis (those tiny pustules that you get on your thighs or buttocks or elsewhere). People who keep getting these types of infections must take steps to eliminate the staph bacteria that is colonizing their skin.

This is HOW YOU DO IT:

Buy Hibiclens or chlorhexidine wash (an antibacterial soap similar to what surgeons scrub with):

- Find it in the "first aid" section of the pharmacy
- Use it as a body wash every day
- especially use it on the body parts that you would expect to harbor bacteria – feet, underarms, groin, buttocks
- Have everyone who lives with you use it as a body wash three times a week (this also goes for boyfriends or girlfriends who do not live with you)

Buy Triple Antibiotic ointment (or use the prescription cream that Dr. Minars gave you):

- Apply a small amount just inside your nostrils, behind your ears, and in your bell button 3x a day
- Do this for five days in a row
- Repeat this each month

Throw away any old sponges or luffahs in the shower.

Do not share bars of soap (better yet, get rid of the bar soap altogether and use liquid soap from now on).

WHY YOU DO IT:

The hibiclens will cleanse your skin of most colonizing bacteria. Your housemates and significant others must also wash with hibiclens because they may be "colonized" but not infected with staph. So if they do not cleanse their skin, they may keep reinfesting you.

The cream in the nostrils etc... is to kill the bacteria in the areas where it typically hides (and where hibiclens may not reach).