Title

Pre-operative preparation of the skin with a depilatory.

Author
le Roux BT; Lowther CE; Mukheibir SC

Source

Abstract
Although the removal of hair as a pre-operative preparation of the skin is desirable, it need only be removed over an area limited to a planned incision, and then only in hirsute patients. The use of a depilatory cream as an alternative to a razor would seem to have the advantages of increasing patient comfort; of avoiding injuries inflicted by even skilful shaving; and perhaps of diminishing the incidence of wound infection, without significant risk of reaction to the depilatory. Routine extensive pre-operative hair removal in all patients is unnecessary.

Title

Preoperative skin preparation: clinical evaluation of depilatory cream.

Author
Powis SJ; Waterworth TA; Arkell DG

Source

Abstract
Preoperative hair removal by a depilatory cream was compared with routine shaving. Although the incidence of wound infection was similar in both groups, cream depilation was found to be better. It was effective, atraumatic, non-toxic, and could be self-administered. Furthermore, it could be used safely on granulating wounds and did not support bacterial growth. Depilation was associated with a significant reduction in skin surface bacteria and proved to be cheaper than shaving.
Preoperative hair removal: a random prospective study of shaving versus clipping.

Balthazar ER; Colt JD; Nichols RL


We report the results of a random, prospective study of electrical clipping versus routine razor shaving in the removal of hair immediately before operation. Two hundred patients having elective inguinal herniorrhaphy according to strict protocol were included in this study. Unsatisfactory skin preparation, as evidenced by gross cuts made in the skin during hair removal, was noted in 7% of those shaved and 4% of those clipped. Two subcutaneous wound infections occurred in the shaved group (2%) and one in the clipped group (1%). This study indicates that preoperative clipping of hair with electric barber's clippers immediately before operation is a safe, well tolerated procedure that does not increase the risk of postoperative wound infection.