



Antiseptic vaginal preparation before caesarean section effective for preventing postoperative endometritis

Clinical question

How effective is vaginal cleansing before caesarean section with an antiseptic solution for preventing postoperative infections?

Bottom line

Vaginal preparation with an antiseptic solution (povidone-iodine) immediately before caesarean delivery reduced the risk of post-operative endometritis (from 9.4% to 5.2%). This benefit was particularly apparent for women undergoing caesarean delivery with ruptured membranes (from 15.4% to 1.4%). Vaginal cleansing did not reduce fever or wound complications. No adverse events such as allergy or irritation were noted. Pre-operative vaginal cleansing is a simple inexpensive intervention.

Caveat

This review is limited by the somewhat small number of trials (4). Information on other methods or other solutions for vaginal cleansing was lacking.

Context

Caesarean deliveries are common today, with almost 1 in 3 babies born by caesarean in some countries. Despite the widespread use of prophylactic antibiotics, postoperative infectious morbidity still complicates caesarean deliveries.

Cochrane Systematic Review

Haas DM et al. Vaginal preparation with antiseptic solution before caesarean section for preventing postoperative infections. Cochrane Reviews 2010, Issue 3. Article No. CD007892.

DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007892.pub2.

This review contains 4 studies involving 1361 participants.

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