

# How to Prevent an Infection after Surgery

## What is a Surgical Site Infection?

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most patients who have surgery do not get an infection. Following your doctor's and nurse's instructions can reduce your chance of getting an infection.

Signs of an infection are;

- ❖ Red or warm skin where you had your surgery
- ❖ Yellow or cloudy fluid coming from your surgical wound
- ❖ Fever

## What Can I do to Prevent an Infection?

- ❖ Wash your hands often. Wash before you eat, after using the bathroom and before touching your bandage or incision. Ask others to wash their hands too.
- ❖ Do not touch your bandage or incision unless necessary. Follow your doctor's instructions on showering and changing your bandage.
- ❖ Ask people not to visit if they are sick.
- ❖ Take your antibiotics if your doctor orders them. Do not skip doses or stop taking them before they are gone.
- ❖ Do not smoke. Smoking can make it harder for you to heal after surgery.
- ❖ Eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids. If you are diabetic, keep your blood sugars controlled.
- ❖ Wear clean clothing after surgery.
- ❖ Sleep on clean sheets after surgery.
- ❖ Do not sleep with pets or allow them close to your surgical site until incisions are healed.
- ❖ Use a clean towel with every shower or bath. Do not share your towel.
- ❖ Call your surgeon if you think you may have an infection.