

You are Having Surgery: How do you Prevent an Incision Infection?

Before Your Surgery

Ask questions.

Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand something. It's *Your Body*.

Avoid germs.

- Take a warm soapy shower the night before surgery and the day of surgery.
- Don't shave the area of your surgery.
- Don't sleep with your pets the night before surgery.
- Brush your teeth or dentures before you go to the hospital.
- Wear clean clothes to the hospital.
- Ask family, friends and other visitors not to visit you in the hospital when they are sick.
- Wash your hands after you use the toilet.

Tell your surgeon if you are feeling sick or have any infection.

Even if it is only a small sore far from your surgery site or a sore throat. Any infection may increase your risk of a surgical infection.

Control your sugar.

If you have diabetes or you have pre-diabetes, you may get an infection if your blood sugar is too high. Talk to your surgeon about your blood sugar.

Stop using tobacco.

Even if it is just for the days before, during and after your surgery, stop smoking. Smoking makes it harder for you to heal. Ask your doctor for help.

While in the Hospital

Wash your hands.

- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Wash your hands after you use the toilet.
- Ask family and visitors to wash their hands.

Don't touch your incision or bandages.

- Keep these as clean as possible.
- Don't let the doctor or nurse touch your incision unless they wash their hands and are wearing gloves.

Get moving after surgery.

- This is to help your blood get moving and help with healing.
- Get out of bed as soon as you can. Your nurse will help you.
- If you can't get up, move your feet up and down in a pumping motion, during every TV commercial, to help keep the blood moving in your legs.

Breathe deeply.

This helps to keep your lungs open to help prevent pneumonia.

After you go Home

Avoid germs.

- Wash your hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- You and your family should wash hands before touching your incision or bandage.
- Ask family, friends and other visitors not to visit you when they are sick.
- Don't sleep with your pets. Keep them away from your incision and your bandages.

Watch for signs of infection.

- If your incision is red, has pus, or is warm, call your surgeon.
- If you have fever and chills, call your surgeon right away.