

# 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.