

# Preventing Surgical Site Infections

## What are Surgical Site Infections?

Surgical site infections occur in a part of the body where surgery has been done. Most patients do not get an infection after surgery (only 1 to 3 out of every 100).

## What are the symptoms of Surgical Site Infections?

- Fever
- Redness, pain, drainage of cloudy fluid or bad odor from the place on your body where you had surgery

## Can Surgical Site Infections be treated?

- Yes. Most surgical site infections can be treated with antibiotics.
- Sometimes patients need another surgery to treat the infection.

## Preventing Surgical Site Infections Before Surgery

- If needed, you may be given an antibiotic before surgery.
- If hair has to be removed, clippers will be used.

You will NOT be shaved with a razor – this could irritate the skin and lead to infection.

- All doctors and nurses clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after caring for each patient.

## Preventing Surgical Site Infections During Surgery

- Before starting the surgery, doctors and other staff in the operating room (OR) will wash their hands and arms up to their elbows with a germ-killing soap.
- Everyone in the OR wears special hair covers, masks, gowns and gloves during the procedure to keep the surgery area clean.
- The surgical site on the body is cleaned with a special soap that kills germs.



*If you do not see your providers wash their hands, it's OK to ASK them to do so.*

## How Can You Prevent Surgical Site Infections?

- **Tell your doctor about all medical problems.** Diseases like diabetes, allergies and other surgeries can change how you heal after surgery.
- **Bathe with special soap.** Your doctor may order you to use germ killing soap for bathing the night before and the morning of your surgery.
- **Quit smoking.** Patients who smoke get more infections.
- **Do not shave near where you will have surgery.** Irritated skin can lead to infection.
- **Wash your hands frequently.** Make sure everyone around you does too!



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