

# Preventing Surgical Site Infections and Complications

## BEFORE

- ❖ Inform your doctor about any infections after a previous surgery or any other serious infection you have had.
- ❖ Tell your doctor about any medical problems you have that are new since your last visit. Health problems like asthma, diabetes, cold/flu symptoms and obesity could affect your surgery or treatment.
- ❖ If you have diabetes, monitor and make every effort to control your blood sugar.
- ❖ Quit smoking. Patients who smoke get more infections. Your doctor can assist with strategies to help you quit smoking in advance of your surgery.
- ❖ Shower/wash surgical location with Hibiclens soap/antiseptic skin cleanser. Use a clean towel and washcloth. Rinse well; it is important to get all the soap off your body. Wear clean clothes. Do not apply lotions, powders, hairspray or makeup.
- ❖ Inform your doctor of any active skin infections, rashes or sores prior to surgery.

## AFTER

### *In the hospital*

- ❖ After surgery, while you are awake, frequently take deep breaths and cough. This helps keep your lungs clear. If you had abdominal surgery, it may help to splint your incision with a pillow.
- ❖ Depending on the type of surgery you have, your doctor may order special stockings or sleeves to increase blood circulation in your legs.
- ❖ If you notice a warm, painful, or swollen area on your leg, notify your doctor immediately. If it is after hours, go to the emergency room.

- ❖ Get up and walk as soon as your doctor permits. Walking increases blood circulation and helps prevent blood clots. Move or flex your feet and legs frequently until you can start walking. Don't stay in one position for long periods.
- ❖ If you do not see your healthcare providers clean their hands prior to examining you (either with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) request that they do so.
- ❖ Visitors should clean their hands upon visiting you. If you do not see them clean their hands, ask them to do so. Visitors should not touch the surgical wound or dressing.
- ❖ Keep your dressing clean, dry and intact. Remove the dressing as indicated in your instruction sheet.

### *At home*

- ❖ Before going home, you will be given specific instructions on taking care of your surgical site. Make sure you understand these instructions before going home.
- ❖ Continue to do some walking and change positions as directed by your doctor.
- ❖ Always wash your hands before and after caring for your wound.
- ❖ Visitors should clean their hands upon visiting you. If you do not see them clean their hands, ask them to do so. Visitors should not touch the surgical wound or dressing.
- ❖ Keep your environment as clean as possible before and after surgery.
- ❖ Use clean bed linens and wear clean clothing. Do not allow pets in your bed during your recovery.
- ❖ Report immediately to your doctor any signs of infection:
  - Fever over 101 degrees
  - Increased pain at wound not related to activity
  - Increased, cloudy, and/or colored drainage from the wound

- Opening up of the wound
- Wound becomes hot, red, and tender

## Pain Control

### BEFORE

- ❖ You will make a plan with your doctor in advance of your surgery about pain control choices.

### AFTER

#### *In the hospital*

- ❖ Keep your nurse updated about your pain level and report persistent pain immediately. Nurses or staff may ask you to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 being no pain.
- ❖ You should be given pain relief medication when pain first begins. Make sure to request pain medication if you do not receive it.
- ❖ You may request pain medication in advance of treatments that may cause pain.

#### *At home*

- ❖ Take pain medication when pain first begins and keep a record; or
- ❖ Take pain medication in advance of treatments or therapies that may cause pain.
- ❖ Take medication as directed; it provides the best pain control. However, do not exceed maximum dosage or frequency. If you are having difficulty controlling pain, contact your doctor or doctor's nurse immediately.

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## General Information

### BEFORE

- ❖ Follow all preoperative instructions given to you by your doctor, including those in this brochure.
- ❖ The surgical department will contact you 1-2 days prior to surgery to confirm instructions and times.
- ❖ You will be unable to drive after the surgery. Arrange for someone to drive you home.
- ❖ Don't eat or drink anything after midnight.
- ❖ Stop taking any: diet medication 14 days prior to surgery and any blood thinning medication 5 days prior to surgery. (This includes aspirin, ibuprofen, Coumadin, and Aggrenox.)
- ❖ Do not take any blood pressure medication within 24 hours of your surgery.
- ❖ If preoperative testing is ordered by your surgeon, Central Scheduling will call you to schedule it. (If you prefer, an order can be sent to your primary care doctor, who will assist you in obtaining this testing.) If your surgeon has told you that you need medical or cardiac clearance before surgery, contact your primary care doctor or cardiologist to obtain it.
- ❖ Wear loose-fitting clothing the day of surgery. Don't wear eye contacts, makeup, nail polish, or jewelry or bring any valuables with you the day of surgery.

### AFTER

- ❖ Follow all post-surgical advice you received from your doctor, including that in this brochure.
- ❖ Call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment for 7-10 days after your surgery.
- ❖ Don't ever worry about being a "bother"; if you have questions or concerns, please call our office.

P R E P A R I N G F O R S U R G E R Y

*Your pre-surgical appointment with your surgeon and surgical staff will provide you with specific details regarding your surgery.*

*This brochure gives you an overview about getting ready for surgery and provides tips for care after surgery.*

*Call our office at 815-717-8730 if you have any additional questions or concerns.*



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## BEFORE AND AFTER: A PATIENT GUIDE TO SURGERY



*A brief overview about preparing for and recovering from surgery to improve your comfort, outcome, and minimize risk of complications.*