



A surgical site infection is a risk with any type of surgery. You can take steps to reduce your risk of surgical site infection and complications.

- Talk with your healthcare provider about your risk of infection and review steps you can take to reduce your risk prior to the procedure.
- Know the signs and symptoms of surgical site infection.
- Know how to reduce your risk while you are in the hospital.



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Stanford Hospital & Clinics is committed to implementing strategies to improve surgical care and to reduce the risk of surgical site infections.

We want your surgical experience at Stanford Hospital & Clinics to be positive. That experience includes educational materials that describe the process of your surgery and the measures we take to ensure your safety. It is especially important to reduce the risk of infection.

These are general guidelines. You will be provided with more specific instructions related to your surgery before your discharge from the hospital.

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SURGERY GUIDELINES

SURGICAL SITE INFECTION: REDUCING YOUR RISK



PRIOR TO SURGERY

KEY POINTS

Tell your healthcare provider about other medical problems you may have. Factors such as diabetes, obesity, smoking and some medications could affect your surgery and your treatment.

1. Begin as soon as possible to make changes to reduce your surgical risk:
- Quit smoking
 - Maintain a good nutrition and exercise program
 - Diabetic patients should work with their primary healthcare provider to gain control of blood sugar levels
 - Discuss medications that may need to be adjusted before surgery. These may include blood thinners, diabetes medications and anti-inflammatory, immunosuppressant medications like steroids.

24 HOURS BEFORE SURGERY

Chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) is a skin cleanser used for patients undergoing surgery to reduce the risk of infection. You will be instructed to use a CHG sponge in the shower the night before and morning of surgery. On your day of surgery, the nursing staff will confirm that you have taken the shower with CHG.

DAY OF SURGERY

HEALTHCARE TEAMS' ROLE IN PREVENTION

- Your surgeon may use electric clippers to remove some of your hair before surgery.
- Your surgical team will apply a skin antiseptic immediately before the surgery
- If ordered by your surgeon, you will receive antibiotics in the operating room.
- Throughout your hospital stay, your healthcare team will practice hand hygiene to minimize the risk of infection.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of respiratory or other infection.
- Do not shave near the area where you will have surgery. Shaving with a razor can irritate your skin and make it easier to develop an infection.

24 HOURS AFTER SURGERY

- Family and friends should clean their hands with alcohol gel or soap and water **before** and **after** visiting you.
- Expect anyone who has contact with or cares for you in the hospital to practice hand hygiene.
- Family or friends who visit should not touch your surgical wound or dressing.
- Before you go home, your doctor or nurse will explain everything you need to know about caring for your wound.

AFTER SURGERY

After your surgery and hospital stay, it is important to watch for any changes in your symptoms. Call your physician immediately or go to the nearest emergency room if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

CHECK DAILY FOR:

- Surgical site redness, tenderness, and/or warmth
- Excessive bright red or pus-like drainage at surgical site
- Chills or fever of 100.4 degrees (38°C) or greater

Practicing good hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to reduce the spread of infection.

It is especially important to clean your hands before and after touching any surgical wound or surgical site.