

# Preventing Infections From Your Surgery



Follow the steps below to prevent infections from your surgery and increase your chances for a good recovery and overall health. Ask your care team about specific instructions related to your surgery.

## Before your surgery:



**Do not shave or use hair removal products** around the surgical site (the area where you're going to have surgery) for at least 3 days before surgery. These can irritate your skin and could lead to infection.



**Keep your nails clean**, trimmed, and free of polish or artificial nail products. These may carry germs and increase your infection risk. This applies to the patient and anyone caring for the patient.



**Quit smoking and vaping, and avoid secondhand smoke.** People who smoke or who are exposed to smoke get more infections. Talk with your care team about how you can quit smoking before your surgery and what tools are available to help you quit. We recommend that you stop smoking 4-6 weeks before surgery.

## The day before surgery:



In the evening, **shower or bathe with a liquid soap or new bar of antibacterial soap** such as Dial®, Hibiclens®, or the soap we gave you at your clinic visit. Pay special attention to cleaning your skin folds, armpits, groin, and belly button.



**Wash your hair** with shampoo, and dry off with a clean towel.



**Do not apply any skin products** like deodorant, lotions, creams, powders, makeup, or perfume after you shower or bathe.



**Dress in clean clothes and sleep with clean sheets** and clean comfort items (such as blankets, stuffed toys, pacifiers, etc.) on the bed. Clean means laundered and dried and not used until the night before or day of surgery.

## The day of surgery:



**Shower or bathe with a liquid soap or new bar of antibacterial soap** such as Dial®, Hibiclens®, or the soap we gave you at your clinic visit. Pay special attention to cleaning your skin folds, armpits, groin, and belly button.



**Do not apply any skin products** like deodorant, lotions, creams, powders, makeup, or perfume after you shower or bathe.



**Dress in freshly laundered, loose-fitting clothes.** Make sure all comfort items you are bringing to the hospital are clean, such as blankets, toys, etc.



**Brush your teeth** and rinse your mouth. This reduces your risk of pneumonia (a lung infection) after surgery.

## After surgery:



**Keep your incision (the cut made during surgery) clean and dry.**

Always wash your hands before and after changing dressings or touching the incision. Scrub your fingers, forearms, and under your nails with soap for at least 20 seconds.



**Do not take a bath** or put your incision underwater (such as in a pool or hot tub) until your care team says it's okay. **Ask your team about when it is safe to start showering, and what type of soap you should use.**



**Wear clean clothes, sleep on clean sheets, and keep pets away from your incision.**

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