

# Preventing Infections from Surgery

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At C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Von Voigtlander Women's Hospital, preventing infections from surgery is an important responsibility for you, your healthcare team, and your family and friends.

## What happens if I get an infection from surgery?

- You may have to stay in the hospital for a longer time. Some infections require you to stay in the hospital for an extra 6 weeks.
- You may have to have extra invasive or painful treatments and procedures. This may include the placement of new IV catheters, frequent blood draws, wound care, or surgery.
- You may become very ill and require blood pressure and breathing support. A severe infection can cause organ damage or even lead to death.
- The infection may spread to other patients. Some patients are more likely to get infections, and others do not respond to infection treatment as well as others.

**Because of this, it's important to take action and avoid infections from surgery using the checklist below:**

### Before your surgery:



- ☐ You and all your family members should **start practicing proper handwashing**. If you need more instruction on the best way to wash your hands, contact someone from your healthcare team.



- ❑ **Do not shave or use hair removal products** around the area where you're having surgery for at least 3 days before surgery. Shaving and hair removal products can irritate the skin and lead to infection.



- ❑ **Keep you and your child's nails clean**, trimmed, and free of polish or artificial nail products. These may carry germs and increase your infection risk.
  - Packing a pair of clean socks or mittens to cover hands may be helpful for babies.



- ❑ **Quit smoking.** Patients who smoke get more infections. Talk with your doctor about how you can quit before your surgery.
  - All friends and family members should avoid or limit smoking around the patient. If clothes smell of smoke, change or make sure to cover clothes with a blanket before seeing the patient. Secondhand smoke causes many health problems or infections in babies and children.



- ❑ **Begin decolonization** (procedures to decrease the germs and bacteria in your body) as instructed by your care team.

### The day before surgery:



- ❑ You and all family members should continue to **wash your hands properly**.



- ❑ **Wash any special linens, toys, clothes, car seats, pacifiers, or other comfort items** that you will be bringing to the hospital or using when you go home from the hospital. Please limit the number of these items to reduce your risk of infection.



- ☐ In the evening, you should **shower or bathe with a liquid body wash or new bar of antibacterial soap** such as Dial®, Hibiclens®, or the soap provided to you at your clinic visit.
- ☐ **Wash your hair** with shampoo and dry off with a clean towel.



- ☐ **Do not put on any deodorant, lotions, creams, powders, makeup, or perfume.**



- ☐ **Dress in clean clothes** and sleep with clean sheets on your bed.

### The day of your surgery:



- ☐ You and all family members should **continue practicing proper handwashing** by washing your hands before entering the patient's room and before touching the patient or any patient items.



- ☐ If you did not shower the night before, or if you are unclean, **shower or bathe with a liquid body wash or new bar of antibacterial soap** such as Dial®, Hibiclens®, or the soap provided to you at your clinic visit.



- ☐ **Do not put on any deodorant, lotions, creams, powders, makeup, or perfume.**



- ☐ **Dress in freshly laundered, loose-fitting clothes.**



- ❑ **Brush your teeth** and rinse your mouth, making sure not to swallow any of the toothpaste. Brushing your teeth reduces your chances of pneumonia (a lung infection) after surgery.
  - For younger children, have them brush without toothpaste.



- ❑ **Limit your visitor contact** on the day of surgery to avoid coming into contact with new germs and bacteria, especially after bathing. For patient safety, we will limit the number of visitors that can go into the pre-op area.

### After your surgery:



- ❑ You and all family members should **continue practicing proper handwashing** by washing your hands before entering the patient's room and before touching the patient or any patient items.

- ❑ **Wash your hands** before and immediately after going to the bathroom and diaper changes. Change dirty linen and clothes as soon as possible.



- ❑ **Keep your incision (the cut made during surgery) clean and dry.** Always wash your hands before and after changing dressings, changing clothes, or touching the incision.



- ❑ **Do not take a bath or let your incision go underwater** (such as in pools, lakes, sprinklers, or hot tubs) until your doctor says it's okay. Ask your healthcare team about when it is safe to start showering.



- ❑ **Wear clean clothes.**
  - Babies and children should wear a shirt, bib, or onesie to prevent drool and spit-ups from getting on the incision.



- ☐ **Keep pets away from your incision.** Wash hands after petting or caring for your pet.



- ☐ Keep toys, blankets, stuffed animals, and pacifiers clean.



- ☐ After you leave the hospital, make sure your home environment is kept as clean as possible.

**Ask your care team about other specific instructions related to your surgery.**

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