

Patient Information

Surgical Site Infections -Ophthalmology-

Reviewed by Infection Control & Epidemiology 03/2010

What is a Surgical Site Infection (SSI)?

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most patients who have surgery do not develop an infection.

Some of the common symptoms of a surgical site infection are:

- Redness and pain around the area where you had surgery
- Drainage of cloudy fluid from your surgical wound
- Fever

Can SSIs be treated?

Yes. Most surgical site infections can be treated with antibiotics. The antibiotic given to you depends on the bacteria (germs) causing the infection. Sometimes patients with SSIs also need another surgery to treat the infection.

What can I do to prepare myself for surgery?

- Stop using all eye makeup 3 days prior to surgery, no eye shadow or mascara.
- If your surgeon prescribed preoperative eye drops, begin using the drops from the prescription as the surgeon and the label directs. If the drops are to be used 4 times daily they may be used at breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime.
- If lid scrubs were prescribed or provided, use them as directed before your surgery just before going to bed.
- If you currently use artificial tears or other eye drops at home, we ask that you use a new bottle beginning 3 days before your surgery.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY: WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY EVERY TIME YOU USE YOUR DROPS AND OR THE LID SCRUBS.**
- For cataract and other intraocular (inside the eye) surgery you will follow up as advised by your surgeon after your surgery.

What can I do to help prevent SSIs?

Before your surgery:

- Tell your surgeon about other medical problems you may have. Health problems such as allergies, diabetes, and obesity could affect your surgery and your treatment.
- Quit smoking. Patients who smoke get more infections. Talk to your surgeon about how you can quit before your surgery.

After your surgery:

- Follow your surgeon's instructions regarding administration of medicines after the surgery.
- Do not allow your dressing to get wet.

What do I need to do when I go home after my eye surgery?

- Before you go home, your surgeon, nurse or technician should explain everything you need to know about taking care of your eye. Make sure you understand how to care for your eye before you leave.
- Always clean your hands before and after caring for your eye.
- Before you go home, make sure you know who to contact if you have questions or problems after you get home.
- If you have any symptoms of an infection, such as redness and pain at the surgery site, drainage, or fever, call your surgeon immediately using the number provided to you.

If you do not see your caregiver cleanse their hands, please ask them to do so.

If you have further questions, please contact your surgeon, nurse or technician.