

Protecting yourself from getting an infection after surgery is very important. The following instructions will help lower your risk of getting an infection:

Hygiene

Make sure you, your family and your caregivers clean your hands often, either with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before and after touching your wound.

Do not take soaking baths. Soaking in a bath, pool, or hot tub within the first 2-4 weeks after surgery can break open your wound. An opened wound can let in germs.

SHOWER DAILY or otherwise directed by your doctor. Gently clean the wound with a mild soap or a soap that helps kill germs like the chlorhexidine solution from the pre-operative shower. Rinse off all the soap and dry your wound completely with a freshly washed towel.

Wound Care

Make sure you look at your incision DAILY. Ask a family member or caregiver for help if you are unable to see it.

Your incision has many layers that heal at the same time. You should receive specific instructions from your doctor on how to care for your wound.

- You may have surgical glue called *Dermabond*® holding your incision together. See specific *Dermabond*® instructions.
- You may have staples holding your incision together. These will be taken out at your follow up visit with your doctor.
- You may have *SteriStrips* (like thin tape) over your incision. These will be removed at your follow up visit with your doctor. They may begin to curl after a few days and may start to fall off their own.

Do not use lotions, powder, creams, or ointments on or around your wound unless your doctor has told you do so.

If your incision is in or near a **skin fold** (e.g. under breast, abdominal crease), make sure you are keeping the area clean and dry. If you have skin that hangs over incision, you should lift it for careful cleaning. Incision should be checked 3 times a day.

DIET

Making sure you have a nutritious and balanced diet is essential for wound healing!

If you have **Diabetes** and your blood sugars are out of control, this can put you at increased risk for infection. Please discuss goal blood sugar level and treatment with your doctor.

When to Call the Provider?

Watch for the following signs of infection and call your doctor or visit the urgent care, or emergency room if you have any of these symptoms:

- Fever over 100.4 °F (often with chills and body aches)
- Feeling more pain in and around your wound
- Opening of your wound and edges are no longer together
- Liquid or pus coming from your wound
- Heat, redness, or swelling around your wound

KEY POINT

A key thing to remember about surgery is that **you should feel better and your wound should look better every day after surgery.** If you start feeling worse, or your wound starts looking worse, call your doctor immediately!

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call your doctor 😊