

## Top 10 things my healthcare team can do to help prevent a surgical site infection

- Screen for staph bacteria.
- Provide chlorhexidine (CHG) soap or cloths to clean skin at home before surgery.
- Use clippers, not razors, if hair needs removing.
- Give antibiotics at the right time before surgery and again during surgery, depending on the procedure length.
- Adjust antibiotic amount according to weight, if necessary.
- Use an alcohol-based CHG skin prep in the operating room.
- Keep blood sugar levels below 200 mg/dl during and after surgery.
- Keep my body temperature and oxygen at recommended levels.
- Provide an oral CHG wash just before the procedure.



Courtesy Molnlycke Health Care

- Give clear instructions for home care and make sure I understand them.



Courtesy Meriter-UnityPoint Health

## Preventing surgical site infections



Courtesy Meriter-UnityPoint Health

### More information

#### American College of Surgeons

<http://www.facs.org/patienteducation/surgery.html>

#### Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

<http://consumers.site.apic.org/>

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/ssi/ssi.html>

#### Institute for Healthcare Improvement

<http://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Completed/ProjectJOINTS/Pages/default.aspx>

## Top 10 things I can do to help prevent a surgical site infection

- Use medicine for my nose before surgery if I test positive for staph bacteria.
- Take at least two showers with chlorhexidine (CHG) soap or use the CHG cloths at least twice before surgery, following all instructions.
- Do not shave around the surgical area for at least two days before surgery.
- Lose weight before surgery if I am overweight.
- Stop smoking before surgery and during my recovery.
- Ask my doctor about keeping my diabetes under control before, during and after surgery.
- Tell my doctor all the medicines (including vitamins) I take and how much caffeine and alcohol I use.
- Tell my doctor or nurse when I am in pain and take medicine as directed.
- Wash hands before changing dressings or touching the wound, keep my home clean, wear clean clothes, and keep pets away from the wound.
- Call my doctor if I have a fever, increased pain, drainage, redness or swelling around the incision.



DPH photo



DPH photo



Courtesy Meriter-UnityPoint Health

Although uncommon, infections sometimes happen after surgery, in the area of the body where the procedure took place. These are called surgical site infections, or SSIs.

You and your healthcare team can do many things before, during and after your surgery to make sure you have the best outcome possible. Ask your surgeon to check the items that are important for your type of procedure.



Courtesy Meriter-UnityPoint Health



Wisconsin Healthcare-Associated Infections  
Prevention Advisory Committee  
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/HAI/PDFs/2013HAICommittee.pdf>



What I can do to prevent...

# Surgical Site Infections

...by working together with my healthcare team.



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