



# QUESTIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ANSWERS

## What is a Surgical Site Infection?

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs on the part of the body where the cut was made. These infections are rare. Only about 3 in 100 patients get a surgical site infection.

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

- redness and pain around the surgery site
- a cloudy fluid that oozes from the site
- fever

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs.**

## What is St. Vincent Charity Hospital doing to prevent surgical site infections?

Your surgery team will clean their hands and arms with a germ killing soap before surgery.

- To keep the area germ free your surgery team will wear special hair covers  
masks  
gowns  
gloves
- If any hair needs to be removed from the surgery site we will use **electric clippers**. We will not use a razor. Razors can irritate the skin and make it easier to get an infection.
- We will clean the surgery site with a soap that kills germs.
- About one hour before surgery we will give you germ killing medicines called antibiotics (**an- ti -bi -ot- ics**). The antibiotics will be stopped 24 hours after surgery.

- Before and after caring for each patient our caregivers will clean their hands. They will use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

### **What can you do to prevent surgical site infections?**

Before surgery:

- Tell your doctor about other medical problems you have. Problems such as allergies or diabetes could affect your surgery and treatment.
- Quit smoking. Patients who smoke get more infections. Talk to your doctor about how you can quit before surgery.
- Do not shave with a razor near the surgery site. A razor can irritate the skin and make it easier to get an infection.
- Speak up if someone tries to shave you with a **razor** before surgery.
- Ask why you need to be shaved.
- Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns.
- Ask if you will get antibiotics before surgery.

After surgery:

- Make sure doctors, nurses and other caregivers clean their hands before and after they examine you. If you do not see them clean their hands, ask them to do so.
- Wash your hands after you use the bathroom and before you eat.
- Family and friends who visit should not touch the wound or dressing.
- Family and friends should clean their hands before and after visiting you. If you do not see them clean their hands remind them to do so.
- Ask family and friends **not** to visit if they feel ill.

### **What do I need to know before leaving the hospital?**

- Your doctor or nurse should explain everything you need to know about how to care for your wound. **Ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.**
- Always clean your hands before and after caring for the wound.
- Make sure you know who to call if you have problems or questions after you get home.

- **Call your doctor right away if you have any signs of infection, such as**  
redness  
pain  
oozing from the wound  
fever

Our doctors serve with a deep respect for all. Their goal is to give the best care and education whether or not a person can pay.

**St. Vincent Charity Hospital**

2351 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115  
216-861-6200

TTY: Ohio Relay 1-800-750-0750

**St. Luke's Health Center**

11201 Shaker Boulevard  
Cleveland, Ohio 44104  
216-721-6900

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**ST. VINCENT CHARITY  
MEDICAL CENTER**

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