

Personal and Home Hygiene Before and After Surgery

Before Surgery:

Oral Hygiene

- A dental exam is a good idea prior to surgery. Dental work should be completed (cleaning or other work) at least 30-days prior to surgery if not longer, depending on surgeon's recommendations. If you suspect you may have an infection in your mouth, see your dentist and please inform your surgeon.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day, being sure not to irritate the gum lines and cause bleeding. Watch for sores or infected areas in the mouth. This will increase your risk for an infection prior to surgery. Use an alcohol free mouthwash twice a day starting at least 3 days prior to surgery.



Body Hygiene

- Bathe daily with a liquid antibacterial soap beginning 3 days prior to surgery.
- Use a nail brush and pick to make sure your finger nails and hands are nice and clean.



Day of Surgery:

- Shower with liquid antibacterial soap as directed.
- Be sure to have clean laundered sheets on your bed at home.
- Wear clean clothes to the hospital and bring clean clothes to go home in.



During Your Hospital Stay:

- Ask family and visitors to wash their hands when they visit.
- Do not allow visitors to touch your incision/dressing, sit on your bed or use your bathroom.
- Brush your teeth and wash your body daily using special bathing cloths provided.
- Ask that your bed and gown be changed daily or more often if soiled.

After Surgery:

Bathing

- No submersion (bathtub, pool, Jacuzzi, etc.) for 6 weeks or as directed by your surgeon. Do not get your incision wet until 5 days after surgery. Bathe daily using a mild liquid soap for 45-60 days. **DO NOT** use bar soap, because of bacteria and the sharing with other family members.
- Use a clean wash cloth and clean towel each time you bathe after surgery. After 5 days, gently wash your incision first, then the rest of your body. When drying, pat your incision dry first, then dry the rest of your body being careful not to re-touch your incision.



Personal and Home Hygiene Before and After Surgery

Diligent hand washing is the single best way to prevent infection. Have family and friends wash their hands when visiting or assisting with dressing changes or personal care.

- Hand washing instructions:
 - Turn on warm water
 - Wet hands and wrists
 - Use liquid soap
 - Scrub hands thoroughly for at least 30 seconds
 - Dry hands using a clean paper towel (remove hand towels and replace with a roll of paper towels)
 - Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet
- It is important to wash your hands:
 - Before and after meals
 - After a sneeze or cough
 - After going to the bathroom
 - Before and after touching the incision
 - After touching pets



Also...

- Continue to brush your teeth or dentures daily.
- Put on clean underclothes and clothes daily.
- Do not “show off” your incision to people.
- Wash and change your sheets weekly or more often if they become soiled.

Pets and Hygiene

- Pets are great and many people consider them an important part of the family. However, pets can carry germs on their fur that can infect your wound.
- Continue to show affection to your pet, but **do not**:
 - let them near your surgical site... even if covered with a dressing
 - let your pet on your bed, chair or lap while your incision is healing



- We suggest covering your favorite chair with a clean sheet to ensure a clean surface free from pet hair or prior soiling.

Keep your home clean and clutter-free to help to avoid infection.

