



# Prevent Surgical Site Infections

## The Do's and Don'ts of Incision Care



### Do ask questions

- Know how to care for your incision (cut) before going home
- Have your nurse or surgeon explain how to best care for your incision
- Know who to call if you have questions or concerns after you go home



### Do contact your surgeon if

- There is more bloody drainage from your incision than normal
- The drainage smells bad
- The drainage is yellow or green
- There is redness, warmth, or pain around your incision
- You have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- You have chills
- Your incision opens



### Do wash your hands

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after changing your dressing or doing anything with your incision
- Have all visitors wash their hands before and after visiting you



### Do keep your dressing clean, dry, and in place

- Keep your dressing in place until you are told to take it off
- Change your dressing if it becomes covered with blood



### Do shower and change your clothing daily

- **Only shower once your surgeon tells you it's okay**
- If your dressing is still on, do not scrub over it in the shower and gently pat it dry
- If you are allowed to shower with your dressing off, follow the steps listed in the next section on how to wash and dry your incision
- Do NOT shower if there is drainage coming out of your incision
- Always use a clean towel and put on clean clothes



### Do keep your incision clean after the dressing is removed

- Wash your incision with soap and water
- Let the soapy water run over your incision
- Do NOT scrub right over your incision
- Gently pat your incision dry with a clean towel



### Do NOT touch your incision unless it is needed

- Make sure you wash your hands with soap and water before and after touching your incision



### Do NOT let your pets lick or touch your dressing or incision



### Do NOT let visitors touch your incision



### Do NOT lift anything over the weight limit your surgeon told you



### Do NOT use lotions, creams, or oils unless your surgeon told you to



### Do NOT take a tub bath, soak, or scrub your incision



### Do NOT shower if there is drainage coming out of your incision



### Do NOT swim until you are cleared by your surgeon