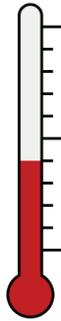


## Signs and Symptoms of Infection

Infection can be a serious complication of surgery so it is important to recognise the signs and symptoms. Infection can delay healing and lead to the need for further treatment or hospitalisation. A post-operative infection may be indicated by some or all of the following:

### Signs and symptoms



- Increased pain
- Swelling in the area of the wound
- Increased redness or warmth of the skin around the wound
- Discharge from the wound that is yellow, green or brown. This may smell unpleasant but not always.
- You feel unwell or have a temperature

**If you notice any of the above signs and symptoms, contact your Surgeon for advice, or your GP if your Surgeon is unavailable. Some Surgeons may require a swab to be taken prior to you being commenced on antibiotics.**

If you are diagnosed with having an infection following your surgery, please notify the Infection Preventionist at the hospital or ask your Healthcare Provider to do so.

## Hand Hygiene How to

# Surgical Wounds

Caring for your wound at home

### Hand washing

You have to rub your hands for at least 20 seconds to get rid of the bacteria.



1. Wet



2. Soap



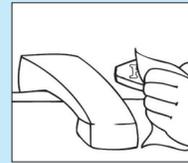
3. Wash 20 seconds



4. Rinse



5. Dry



6. Turn off Tap

### Alcohol-Based Handrub

Your hands must be visibly clean for alcohol-based handrub to be effective.



1. **Place** one controlled pump of gel into the palm of your hand.



2. **Rub** hands together until hands are completely dry.

## What is a surgical wound?

- A surgical wound is the incision made by your Surgeon during an operation.
- At the end of the operation most cuts are stitched, stapled or glued.
- You can help take care of your surgical wound by following the instructions of your Surgeon and/or Nurse.

## Caring for your wound

### Self care includes:

- Keeping the wound clean and dry.
- Changing the dressing if instructed to by the Surgeon or Nurse.
- Regular hand washing.
- Avoiding trauma, pressure, or friction to the wound.
- Stopping smoking.
- Recognising signs and symptoms of infection and seeking advice promptly when required.

## Other important information

- Follow the instructions you were given before leaving the hospital. We will tell you if and when you would need to change the dressing, when you can shower and when or if you need to have sutures/staples removed.
- Always wash your hands before and after touching the dressing.
- If after leaving the hospital your wound bleeds or you have a dressing that is no longer sealed, change the dressing as instructed if you have been given specific advice to do so, otherwise seek advice from your Surgeon, or GP if your Surgeon is unavailable.
- Unless instructed to do so, do not put anything on your wound in the way of ointments, creams or lotions. Do not use soap, talcum powder or shower gel directly over your healing wound.
- Showering is preferable to bathing - do not rub or soak the healing wound when in the shower, a light splash with water is allowable.
- **DO NOT** leave a wet dressing on your wound.
- Only use clean cloths or towels on the wound and pat dry gently. (Do not use the same towel on the rest of your body).

## Other important information (continued)

- Do not wear restrictive or tight clothing over your wound.
- Change into fresh clean clothes everyday.
- Keep bed linen fresh.
- If you have animals you should wash your hands well after touching them and they should not sleep on your bed or sit on your lap until your wound is healed.
- For the first few days after the stitches/staples are removed, the wound will be weak and extra care is required to avoid stretching or knocking it.
- Do not undertake too much activity or dirty work/sport/play until the wound has healed. We recommend you follow the advice of your Surgeon.
- If your wound bleeds, press **firmly** and **continuously** with a clean cloth for 10-20 minutes. When bleeding stops seek advice from your Surgeon or GP if your Surgeon is unavailable.

**If bleeding is excessive or persistent seek medical advice immediately. Keep pressure on the wound.**