

What to know:

PREVENTING WOUND INFECTION AFTER SURGERY



At Stamford Health, your safety is our top priority. As you get ready for your surgery, there are simple steps you can take to lower your risk of infection and help your body heal well.

BEFORE SURGERY:



Do NOT shave or use hair removal products near the surgical area. If needed, your surgical team will safely remove hair on the day of surgery.



Keep your nails clean and trimmed. Avoid artificial nails or nail products.



Avoid smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke for **4–6 weeks** before surgery. This improves your body's ability to heal.



If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control. High blood sugar can slow healing and make it easier to get a wound infection.

EVENING BEFORE SURGERY:



Wash your hair with your usual shampoo prior to bathing your body.



Take a shower or bath using an **antibacterial soap**, such as: Dial, Hibiclens, or the soap recommended by your doctor.



Clean thoroughly, especially your: armpits, groin, belly button, and the area where your surgery will take place.



Do NOT apply deodorant, lotion, creams, powders, makeup, or perfume afterward.

MORNING OF SURGERY:



Shower or bathe again with an antibacterial soap, just as you did the night before.



Pay close attention to cleaning the armpits, groin, and belly button.



Do NOT use deodorants, lotions, creams, powders, makeup, or perfume.



Wear **clean, loose fitting clothing** to the hospital.

AFTER YOUR SURGERY:

Your incision is healing. Help protect it from infection by following these steps:

WOUND CARE:

Wash your hands before touching your incision. If you use gloves, wash your hands before putting them on.

Keep your wound and dressing **clean and dry**.

Follow your doctor's instructions exactly.

Do **not** apply gels, creams, or ointments unless your doctor tells you to.

If you have **Steri Strips**, do not pull or rub them. They will fall off naturally.

If you have **glue covering the wounds** (Dermabond), do not remove it until your care team asks you to do so or they will fall naturally.

If you go home with a drain, follow the care steps your doctor gave you.

BATHING:

Do **not** put your wound under water (baths, hot tubs, pools, or the ocean).

Ask your doctor when this will be safe.

Once your surgeon says you may shower, shower **daily** until the wound has healed.

Pat the incision dry gently with a clean towel, **do not rub**.

KEEP YOUR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN:

Wear **clean clothing** each day.

Sleep on **clean sheets**.

Keep **pets away** from your wound.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR:



Contact your care team right away if you notice any of the following:

Signs of a Possible Infection:

- Redness around the incision.
- Drainage or fluid coming from the wound.
- Increased pain or tenderness.
- Unpleasant smell from the incision.
- The wound is beginning to open.
- A wet or loose dressing.

Call Immediately If:

- Your temperature is **100.4°F (38°C)** or higher.
- You experience **shaking chills**, with or without fever.