

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Ways to Prevent Infections After Surgery

Most patients who have surgery do well. But sometimes patients get infections after surgery (about 3 out of 100). Infections after surgery can lead to other problems. Sometimes, patients have to stay longer in the hospital. Rarely, they die.

Here are some ways you can help lower the risk of infection after surgery:

Days or weeks before surgery:

- Meet with your child's surgeon.
 - Bring a list of all the medicines your child takes now. Tell your child's surgeon why your child is taking each medicine, and how it helps.
 - Tell the surgeon if your child is allergic to any medicine, and what happens when your child gets that medicine.
 - Tell the surgeon if your child has diabetes or high blood sugar. People with high blood sugar have a greater chance of getting infections after surgery.
 - Ask the surgeon about ways to lower your child's risk of getting an infection. The surgeon may give your child antibiotic medicine.

The night before and morning of surgery:

- The night before surgery,
- wash your child's hair
 - give your child a bath
 - use CHG cloths on your child, if ordered by your child's doctor.

CHG (2% chlorhexidine gluconate) cloths are germ-killing (antiseptic) wipes used to clean the skin. Germs live on the skin. CHG cloths kill 99% of the germs on the skin to help prevent germs from causing a serious infection.

When should CHG cloths be used at home?

- Before your child has surgery or a procedure where the skin will be broken.
- CHG cloths will be used once on the night before the surgery or procedure.
- CHG cloths will be used again the day of surgery or procedure before coming to the hospital.

Ask your nurse or doctor for the CHG handout that matches the weight of your child:

- Using CHG Cloths at Home Before Surgery if your child is less than 20 pounds.
- Using CHG Cloths at Home Before Surgery if your child is between 20-60 pounds.
- Using CHG Cloths at Home Before Surgery if your child is more than 60 pounds.

Right before the surgery:

- Show the doctor who puts your child to sleep before surgery (the anesthesiologist) the list of medicines your child takes.
- If your child has diabetes or high blood sugar, tell the anesthesiologist.
- While waiting for surgery, keep your child warm. Ask for blankets, if necessary. Ask the nurse or doctor how your child will be kept warm during and after surgery.
- Ask if your child will get antibiotic medicine. Many people get antibiotics before surgery and for one day after surgery. This can lower the risk of your child getting an infection after surgery.
- If you do not see your child's health care team members clean their hands, ask them to clean them before touching your child. Hands can be cleaned with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

After the surgery:

- All of your child's visitors, including you, need to clean their hands before and after visiting.
- Do not let family or visitors touch your child's surgery site.
- Before and after you care for your child's surgery site, clean your hands.
- Make sure you know the signs of infection before you leave the hospital, and who to call if you see any signs of infection.

Signs of infection include:

- high or low body temperature
- redness around the site of surgery
- pain or severe tenderness around the site of surgery

- the site of surgery is very swollen
- the site of surgery is hot to the touch
- more blood, fluid, or pus comes out of the surgery site
- the site of surgery smells bad
- the site of surgery opens or pulls apart
- the site of surgery takes too long to heal
- fast heart beat

- If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your nurse or doctor.
If you do not understand, ask again.

If you want to learn more, here are some websites:

- www.ihi.org and search for “Patient Guides on Healthcare-Associated Infections.”
- www.npsf.org and search for “Preventing Infections in the Hospital.”
- www.cdc.gov/hai

Now that you’ve read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor what you will do to help keep your child from getting an infection after surgery. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor the signs of infection you should look for. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor what you would do if you see any of these signs of infection. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child’s doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/theemilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/theemilycenter)
Twitter: [@emilycenter](https://twitter.com/emilycenter)
Pinterest: [pinterest.com/emilycenter](https://www.pinterest.com/emilycenter)

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

April 28, 2015 • DRAFT to family review
#1088 • Written by Luci Hanus, BSN, M.Ed., CNOR, and Laura Benson, RN, BSN

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Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!