



CDC CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Tips for Surgery Patients to Prevent Antibiotic Resistance

BEFORE Surgery:

- ⊕ Ask your doctor if you need to be vaccinated against diseases that cause respiratory infections, including influenza and pneumonia. Preventing respiratory infections and their complications decreases antibiotic use.
- ⊕ Ask about the facility's infection control program and any procedures that can help reduce infection risk. Let doctors and nurses know that you are concerned about preventing infections while receiving care.
- ⊕ If you are diabetic, be sure that you and your doctor discuss the best way to control your blood sugar before, during, and after your hospital stay. High blood sugar increases the risk of infection.
- ⊕ If you are overweight, losing weight will reduce the risk of infection following surgery.
- ⊕ If you are a smoker, consider a smoking cessation program. This will reduce your chance of developing a lung infection while in the hospital. It may also improve your healing abilities after surgery.
- ⊕ Be certain your healthcare providers are aware of any medications you currently take. This includes all prescription and over-the-counter medications, home remedies, and dietary supplements. You should also mention any food allergies (e.g. shellfish) that you have. Ask if there are special instructions about taking your medications before and after the procedure.

While in the hospital:

- ⊕ Wash your hands carefully after handling any type of soiled material or body fluids. This is especially important after you have gone to the bathroom.
- ⊕ Let your nurse know if your gowns and linens are soiled.
- ⊕ Since you are part of your healthcare team, do not be afraid to remind doctors or nurses to clean their hands. This includes washing their hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based handrub before working with you.
- ⊕ Some patients are on "isolation precautions". This is usually done to protect the patient and others from infectious diseases. If you are in "isolation," understand what your isolation means and what you should expect from the hospital staff or visitors. Gloves, gowns and masks are sometimes appropriate, depending on the illness.
- ⊕ If you have an intravenous catheter, keep the skin around the dressing clean and dry. Tell your nurse promptly if the dressing is loose or wet.
- ⊕ Likewise, if you have a dressing on a wound, let your nurse know promptly if it becomes loose or wet.
- ⊕ If you have any type of catheter or drainage tube, let your nurse know promptly if it becomes loose or dislodged.



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- ⊕ Since intravenous catheters and drainage tubes are all entry points for infection, discuss with your doctor when these devices can be safely removed.
- ⊕ Carefully follow your doctor's instructions regarding breathing treatments and getting out of bed. Don't be afraid to ask for help, advice, or pain medications.
- ⊕ If possible, ask your friends and relatives not to visit if they feel ill.
- ⊕ Ask how to contact your hospital pharmacist to talk about your medications.
- ⊕ Look at all medications before you take them. If you don't know what they are for, or if they look different than expected, ask why. By asking questions, you may prevent errors. Ask the same questions you would ask your local pharmacist.
- ⊕ Do not let anyone give you medications without checking your hospital ID bracelet. This helps prevent you from getting someone else's medications.

After the hospital:

- ⊕ When you're ready to go home:
 - Ask for the treatment plan before you leave the hospital.
 - Have a healthcare provider or the hospital pharmacist go over each medication with you and a caregiver.
 - Ask which medications you should continue taking.
 - Update your medications list from home, if any prescriptions change or if new medications are added.
 - Notify your primary healthcare provider, including your pharmacist, about any medication changes that occurred in the hospital.
- ⊕ Pay attention to symptoms that may indicate an infection: unexpected pain, chills, fever, drainage, or increased inflammation of a surgical wound. Contact your doctor immediately if any of these occur, especially after you have been discharged from a hospital.

For More Information

www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/healthcare

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