

# Know your zone.

Recovery From Orthopedic Surgery



## DAILY CHECK

- Do not smoke.
- Keep dressing clean, dry and intact if you have one.
- Continue to take your medications as prescribed.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Do your exercises as prescribed by your provider.
- Apply ice as ordered by your physician.
- Walk several times a day using a walker, cane or other assistive devices as instructed by a physician or physical therapist.
- Follow your physician's prescribed activity precautions including elevation and bracing if applicable
- Continue doing your breathing exercises.

## GREEN ZONE

### Your symptoms are under control if:

- Your Incision or dressing is clean, and there is little to no drainage
- You have mild pain that can be controlled with medications
- You can do exercises and activities of daily living
- You are not having shortness of breath, chest pain or fever
- You have regular frequency in bowel movements
- You are following your provider's instructions for exercise and weight-bearing

## YELLOW ZONE

### Call your health care provider if:

- You notice lots of bruising or bleeding
- You are having nose bleeds
- You are bleeding from the gums or see blood in your urine or stool
- It's hard to urinate or you are unable to have a bowel movement for three days in a row or longer

### Call your surgeon/orthopedic doctor's office if:

- You have new numbness or tingling
- You have issues with cast/splint or sling
- You have more swelling or pain than normal since surgery (It is not unusual to have swelling for up

to six months after surgery.)

- You have a fever greater than 101°F for more than 24 hours
- You have drainage, redness or odor at the incision site
- You feel calf tenderness, swelling or warmth in either leg
- For hip and knee surgeries: You are unable to walk or put weight on your leg
- You are not able to move your impacted extremity
- You had shoulder surgery, and you have uncontrolled pain in your arm, deformity in the shoulder and/or lengthening of the arm

## RED ZONE | Call 911 immediately.

## DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.

### Call 911 if:

- You have stroke symptoms including: loss of balance, blurred vision, face drooping on one side, arm and/or leg weakness or speech difficulty.
- You have severe headache
- You have chest pain
- You have pale, gray or blue nail, lip or skin color
- You are coughing up blood
- You have a rapid heart rate
- You have severe shortness of breath
- You experience sudden wheezing

# Preventing Surgical-Site Infections

## What is a surgical-site infection (SSI)?

A surgical-site infection is an infection in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most patients do not develop an infection. However, about one-to-three out of every 100 patients who have surgery do develop infections.

### Some of the common signs of a surgical site infection are:

- Redness and pain around the area where you had surgery
- Drainage of cloudy fluid from your surgical wound
- Fever

### PREVENTION IS THE KEY.

## How do I prevent a SSI?

### Before your surgery:

- Tell your doctor about other medical problems you may have.
- Consider removing acrylic nails or trimming long natural nails. They are full of bacteria. Sometimes patients itch near the site, without washing hands. The mindless itching can pass the bacteria from the nails to the wound.
- Quit smoking. Patients who smoke get more infections. Talk to your doctor about how you can quit before surgery.
- Do not shave near where you will have surgery. Shaving with a razor can irritate your skin and make it easier to develop an infection.
- Use Hibiclens or CHG soap the night before and morning of surgery to cleanse skin of ALL bacteria, as directed by your surgeon.
- The day of surgery, you may also have povidone iodine or mupirocin applied to nostrils. This will reduce the chance of bacteria from your nose spreading to your surgical wound.

### At the time of your surgery:

- Ask if you will get antibiotics before surgery.
- Make sure that your health care providers clean their hands before examining you, either with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. If you don't see your providers clean their hands, ask them to.

## What should I do when I go home?

- Your doctor or nurse should explain what you need to know about taking care of your wound. Make sure you understand how to care for your wound before you leave the hospital.
- Always wash your hands before and after caring for your wound.
- If you have any symptoms of an infection, call your doctor immediately.
- If you don't see your providers clean their hands, ask them to.
- No one should touch the surgical wound or dressings, including you.
- Anyone who visits should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. If you do not see them clean their hands, ask them to.
- Do not let your incision get wet or dirty. No hot tubs, pool or ocean swimming.
- Cleanliness at home should include freshly laundered towels and clothes after a daily shower. Clean linens on your bed.

