

Monitoring Surgical Site Infections

Infection Prevention

Who is this information for?

This information is for those patients who have had an operation at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and will tell you what a surgical site infection is, what symptoms to look for and what you need to do if an infection develops.

What are surgical site infections?

Surgical site infections are infections that occur after surgery. They are usually wound infections. Infections happen when micro-organisms (germs) enter the body through the surgical wound (cut). Micro-organisms live in and on our bodies some help our bodies and some can be harmful. Our bodies have natural defences against the few germs that cause harm, for example skin prevents germs entering the body.

When do these infections develop?

A surgical wound infection can develop at any time from two to three days after surgery until the wound has healed. This is usually up to three weeks after the operation. On occasion an infection can occur several months after the operation this is most likely following surgery when an implant or device has been inserted (for example hip, knee or valve).

How common are surgical wounds infections?

Surgical wound infections are uncommon. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2012) CG74 updated 2017 states that 5% of surgical sites have had an infection. Most surgical wound infections are limited to the skin, but can spread occasionally to deeper tissues. Infections are more likely to occur after surgery on parts of the body that harbour lots of germs, such as the gut.

How will the wound be monitored?

In addition to your medical team monitoring your wound during your stay in hospital a nurse will check for any signs of infection. On discharge you may also be asked to attend your practice nurse or a district nurse. This will be for a dressing change or removal of clips or stitches; this is not part of the surgical monitoring.

What can I do to prevent a surgical site infection?

Do not remove the dressing, touch the wound or the drain as this could transfer germs from your fingers onto the wound. Washing your hands is the most effective thing you can do to prevent surgical site infection.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

Who are the Surgical Site Surveillance Team?

They are part of the Infection Prevention Team. A member of the Surgical Site Infection Surveillance Team may visit you whilst you are in hospital to inform you of the surgical site infection surveillance we perform across the Trust and when we will be contacting you following your discharge.

What are the signs of infection?

- The skin around your wound gets red, sore, feels hot or is swollen
- Your wound has a green or yellow colour discharge (pus)
- You feel generally unwell or you have a temperature

If you have any of the above symptoms contact your GP promptly, however the ward may have given you information on contacting the ward or specialist nurse. Please follow their advice.

What happens if I develop symptoms?

If the nurse or doctor suspects that you have a surgical wound infection, they may take a sample with a swab for tests. You may be prescribed treatment with antibiotics. It would be helpful if you could inform us by telephone or e-mail if your GP or district nurse has diagnosed an infection so we can follow this up. Details can be found at the end of this leaflet.

Will there be any follow up?

About one month after your operation the hospital will contact you by phone to ask if you have had any problems with your wound. The Surgical Site Infection Surveillance Team needs to find out what wound infections occur after patients leave hospital, not just those that develop whilst patients are in hospital to ensure the Trust can reduce wound infection to the absolute minimum.

Will this information be shared with any other organisations?

Yes, this information will be shared with U.K. Health Security Agency but this is clinical information only and names and contact details will not be shared.

How to contact the team

There is a Surgical Site Surveillance Infection Team and an Infection Prevention team who monitor surgical site infection rates within the Trust. Please contact us if you have any questions, compliments or complaints.

Infection Prevention team

New Cross Hospital

Wednesfield Road

Wolverhampton

WV10 0QP

Office hours 7:30am – 3:30pm

01902 307999 Ext: 85282 / 88299 / 84429

E-mail rwh-tr.InfectionPrevention@nhs.net

Please make note overleaf of any changes in your wound so you can discuss these when we call you.

Date	Document wound changes.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。