

# PREVENTING SURGICAL SITE INFECTIONS AFTER SURGERY

## What is a surgical site infection?

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most patients who have surgery do not develop an infection; but the possibility of an infection is always present. Cancer surgery can weaken your immune system, which puts you at higher risk for having an infection. Ask your health care team about the specific risks associated with your surgery and our practices to minimize your risk.

## Some of the common symptoms 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**

## What do I need to do when I go home after surgery?

- Before you go home, your health care team should explain everything 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 clean your hands before and after caring for your wound.
- Before you go home, make sure you know who to contact if you have questions or problems after you get home.
- If you have any symptoms of an infection, such as redness and pain at the surgery site, drainage or fever, call City of Hope's Nursing Triage Call Center 626-218-7133.
- If you have additional questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.

## Call your health care team if you have:

- A fever of **100.4°F** or higher
- Shaking chills or sweats, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, vomiting
- Burning or pain when passing urine
- Redness, swelling, drainage or warmth at the site of a surgical wound, IV line or anywhere on the skin.

## Keep track of the following:

When your fever started

Any other symptoms, such as chills, sweats, shortness of breath.