



The collection of healthcare associated infections (HAI) data will provide greater awareness of HAIs, allow for earlier identification of trends, and promote adherence to strategies for prevention.

Alabama requires that acute healthcare facilities report surgical site infections that occur after certain surgeries. The information that hospitals report to the Alabama Department of Public Health will be compiled, analyzed, and published at: www.adph.org/hai

For more information, go to <http://www.adph.org/hai>



What to expect: Surgery

What is a Surgical Site Infection?

A surgical site infection (SSI) is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. When germs get into these areas, and multiply, the site can become red, sore, and cause even illness in the patient. SSIs can lead to longer hospital stays, long term disabilities, and even death.

Germs can come from your skin, from your stomach, from other people via their hands or clothes, or from the environment, such as the room, furniture, or equipment. If you do get an infection, usually it can be cleared up by antibiotics, or in some cases, another surgery. However, with a few precautions, you and your healthcare providers can help limit your chances of ever having to suffer from an SSI.

Protecting Yourself from Infection

Alabama Department of
Public Health

201 Monroe Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone: 334-206-5971
Toll Free: 1-800-338-8374
www.adph.org/hai



Alabama Department of Public Health

Surgical Site Infection Prevention for Patients.



What can I do before surgery?

Tell your doctor about any medical problems you have, such as diabetes or allergies, so the staff can provide the best care for you individually.

Tell your doctor about all medication you are taking, including all prescription, over-the-counter medications, vitamins or herbal supplements.



Quit smoking. Quitting 30 days before your operation will help decrease your chances of surgical complications.

Don't shave the part of your body that is going to be operated on. Shaving can cause small tears or nicks in your skin. If you need to remove hair from the area, use a hair-removal cream or electric clippers.

Ask your doctor how long you should expect to be on antibiotics or medication.

What can I do after surgery?

Wash your hands, and ensure that your family, friends, and healthcare workers wash their hands. If you don't see someone clean their hands before examining you, don't be shy in asking them to do so.

Ask your friends and relatives not to visit if they feel sick.

Avoid touching the surgical dressings, or the part of the body that was involved in the surgery.

Follow instructions given to you by your healthcare providers about caring for your surgical wound and taking medication.

Keep your wound clean and dry. Only shower or bathe if your healthcare provider allows, and cover the wound if your provider has recommended that you do. Make sure you understand how to care for your wound before leaving the hospital.

Before going home, make sure you know who to contact if you have questions or problems.

How will I know if I have an infection?

If you have any of the following symptoms, call your doctor or nurse immediately:

- Pain and redness
- Fever
- Cloudy drainage or pus
- Chills or sweats
- Swelling around the surgical site



Your healthcare workers want the best for you.
Ask your doctor if you have questions or concerns about your surgery.