

It Takes a Team

Everyone in ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) plays a role in **preventing surgical site and other harmful infections.**

Surgical site infections are **infections that can occur after surgery** in the part of the body where the surgery took place.¹



Surgical site infections are—* Dangerous

Each year in the U.S., there are about **300,000 surgical site infections**. Patients with surgical site infections are **2 to 11 times as likely to die** as a result.²

Costly

Each year in the U.S., surgical site infections cost between **\$3.5 million and \$1 billion**.²

Preventable

Surgical site infections are one of the most common healthcare-associated infections, but **most of them are preventable**.²

* Because ASCs do not yet report surgical site infection data, these statistics are based on U.S. hospital data.

Patients and families should be encouraged to—

- ▶ **ASK** staff if they have washed their hands
- ▶ **BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED** in care by—
 - **Avoiding bringing their own medical equipment** to the ASC, unless granted special permission to do so
 - Always **cleaning their own hands**
- ▶ **CLEARLY SPEAK UP** if they have concerns that staff may not be following safe practices or if they observe a safety issue



Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent infections. Health care personnel will clean their hands **before and after** patient care.

Other important ways to prevent surgical site and other infections at ASCs are—

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization



- Follow fully the instructions on **how to use cleaning and disinfection supplies**.
- Follow the manufacturers' and ASC's instructions for **cleaning and disinfecting medical equipment**.
- Get training each year on high-level **disinfection for all the different types of scopes** that are reprocessed.
- Make sure only **highly trained experts** perform high-level disinfection and sterilization.

Environment of Care



- Keep the health care environment **clean and safe**.
- Make **daily rounds** (walk around) in the health care environment to **assure cleanliness and patient safety**.
- **Report any environmental care problems** as soon as possible so they can be fixed.
- **Clean hands** when moving from a dirty to a clean task on the same patient or after touching the patient or any items in the patient's environment.

Safe Injection Practices



- Clean hands **before handling medications or syringes**.
- **Disinfect the top (rubber septum) of any medication vial** with alcohol before piercing it with a sterile needle.
- Use a sterile needle and syringe **one time on one patient only**.
- Use an intravenous solution bag and tubing for **one patient only**.
- **Prepare medication in clean area**, separate from patient care area and away from used items. If medication is used at the bedside, **throw it out after it is used on one patient**.
- **Use a single-dose vial** of medication whenever possible.
- **Dedicate a multiuse vial** to one patient if medication is drawn up in the patient care area.
- Always use a **new, sterile needle and new, sterile syringe**.

Learn more about infection prevention at ambulatory surgical centers at www.ahrq.gov/haiambisurgery.

1. SHEA, IDSA, AHA, et al. Frequently asked questions about surgical site infections: Patient guide. Accessed April 22, 2016. http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%20guides/NNL_SSI.pdf.

2. Anderson DJ, Podgorny K, Berríos-Torres SI, et al. Strategies to Prevent Surgical Site Infections in Acute Care Hospitals: 2014 Update. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol. 2014 Sep;35 Suppl 2:S66-88. PMID: 25376070. doi:10.1086/ S0195941700093267.