What is a Surgical Site Infection (SSI)?
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. However, infections develop in about 1 to 3 out of every 100 patients who have surgery.
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

Can SSIs be treated?
Yes. Most surgical site infections can be treated with antibiotics. The antibiotic given to you depends on the bacteria (germs) causing the infection. Sometimes patients with SSIs also need another surgery to treat the infection.

What can I do to help prevent SSIs?
Before your surgery:
- Tell your doctor about other medical problems you may have. Health problems such as allergies, diabetes, and obesity could affect your surgery and your treatment.
- Quit smoking. Patients who smoke get more infections. Talk to your doctor about how you can quit before your 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.

At the time of your surgery:
- Speak up if someone tries to shave you with a razor before surgery. Ask why you
need to be shaved and talk with your surgeon if you have any concerns.

• Ask if you will get antibiotics before surgery.

**After your surgery:**

• Make sure that your healthcare providers clean their hands before examining you, either with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

**If you do not see your providers clean their hands, please ask them to do so.**

• Family and friends who visit you should not touch the surgical wound or dressings.

• Family and friends should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after visiting you. If you do not see them clean their hands, ask them to clean their hands.

**What do I need to do when I go home from the hospital?**

• Before you go home, your doctor or nurse 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 your doctor immediately.