

instructions for any abdominal incision, including C-section,



The following are suggestions for abdominal wound care, but you should always follow your physician's specific instructions.

Proper Handwashing

You should wash your hands before and after caring for your abdominal wound. Follow these steps:

- Remove all jewelry from your hands.
- Wet your hands, pointing them downward under warm running water.
- Add soap and wash your hands for 15 to 20 seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" or the "Alphabet Song" twice). Also clean under your nails (a new toothbrush works great).
- Rinse well, keeping your hands pointed downward so the water runs from your wrists downward off your fingertips.
- Dry with a clean towel.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet so you do not get any germs on your hands from the faucet.

Cleansing the surgical site

- Unless your physician has approved tub baths, you may shower and allow soapy water to run over your incision, rinse well and then pat dry, making sure to completely dry the incision (a blow dryer on the "cool" setting may be used to help dry the incision).
- It is important to keep your incision clean and dry, especially if you have an abdominal "roll" or "fold" that hides your incision when sitting or standing.

- A clean sanitary napkin or panty liner may be placed over the incision to keep the area dry (pad side toward skin). It should be changed frequently to keep the area clean and dry.
- Use mild liquid soap when showering or bathing.
- Use a separate, clean washcloth and towel to clean and dry your incision.
- When cleaning your incision between baths or showers, try to gently wipe away any drainage or dried blood that may have built up around it using a clean, damp cloth (face cloth or moist towelette).
- Do not apply lotions, powders or ointments near or on your incision unless directed by your physician.
- Wear loose fitting clothing that will not rub against your incision while it is healing.

Call your doctor if you see any of these changes around the incision:

- Redness or if the incision feels hot
- Pain that has worsened
- Swelling
- Bleeding
- The incision is larger or open
- Drainage is coming from the incision
- Foul odor
- You have a temperature above 100.4°F for more than four hours

Refer to: "Your Guide to Surgery" or "Mother Baby Care Guide" for additional information.

Use a Mirror to Inspect Your Incision Daily for the Next Two Weeks

Normal Healing Incision

- It is normal to have a small amount of clear or straw-colored drainage from your incision for a few days.

Redness to Incision

- Notify your doctor if you have redness, warmth, increased drainage or increased pain to your incision.
- Redness, warmth, increased drainage and pain that has worsened are warning signs of infection.
- It is important to get early treatment if an infection develops.

Infected Incision

Notify your doctor immediately if you have:

- Drainage from your incision that smells foul, looks cloudy or contains pus;
- Separation, enlargement or opening of your incision;
- Increased pain to your incision from what you have normally experienced.