

Post-surgery Information

Deep Venous Thrombosis

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What is it? Deep vein thrombosis is also called "DVT." It is a blood clot that forms inside a vein. The clot may block part or all of the blood flow. It may also break away from the vein wall and travel into the lung. DVT usually occurs in the legs or pelvis. It may also occur in other parts of the body. It is more common over 60 years of age.

Causes: A DVT may be caused by blood that pools or sits in a vein. Resting in bed for a long time after surgery or during a long illness may cause blood to pool. This may cause a blood clot to form. Sometimes the lining of a vein may be injured and a blood clot may form. You may be more likely to get a DVT if you smoke. Or you may get a DVT if other people in your family get clots.

Signs and Symptoms: You may have swelling, pain, or redness in the area of the clot, such as the calf or thigh. One of your calf or thigh veins may feel hard, like a cord. You may have a fever and walking may hurt.

Do's and Don'ts: Following are ways to keep from getting blood clots.

- Move your legs as soon as possible after surgery or during long periods of bed rest.
- Exercise your legs every 1 or 2 hours while on long car or airplane trips.
- Do not smoke if you are taking birth control pills.

Care: You may be put in the hospital for tests and treatment. You may need blood thinners to thin your blood or dissolve the clots(s). The sooner you are treated the less likely you are to get a clot in your lung.

Dehydration

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What is dehydration? Dehydration (dee-heye-DRAY-shen) is a condition that happens when the amount of water in the body is lower than normal. Normally, the body has the right amount of water inside and outside of the cells. Water and electrolytes (mineral salts) are usually in balance in the body. This balance is important to keep your body working properly. With dehydration, electrolyte levels may be increased or decreased. This may cause serious effects, such as your kidneys and other organs to not work properly.

What cause dehydration? Dehydration may be caused by not drinking enough water, losing too much fluid, or both. Any of the following may increase your chance of having dehydration:

- Advanced age with decreased ability to sense thirst or to concentrate urine.
- Being in the sun or heat for too long, or sweating a lot, such as when you exercise.
- Diseases, such as stroke, diabetes, heart problems, or infections.
- Medicines that cause you to lose water and salt, such as diuretics (water pills).
- Vomiting (throwing up), diarrhea, or fever that lasts a long time.

What are the signs and symptoms of dehydration? You may have any of the following:

- Dry eyes or mouth.
- Headache, dizziness, or confusion (cannot think clearly).
- Increased thirst.
- Irregular or fast breathing, fast or pounding heartbeat, and low blood pressure.
- Passing little or no urine, or constipation (dry, hard bowel movement).
- Sudden weight loss.
- Tiredness or body weakness.

Surgical Site Infections

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What is a surgical site infection? A surgical site infection, or SSI, is an infection of a wound you got from surgery. It may develop within the first 30 days after surgery. Oftentimes, SSI occurs 5 to 10 days after surgery. SSI may affect either closed wounds or wounds that were left open to heal. It may affect tissues on any level of your body. Infections may develop in superficial (close to the skin) or deep tissues. In more serious cases, SSI may affect body organ(s).

What causes a surgical site infection? Surgical site infections are caused by germs, called bacteria. Different types of bacteria may reach the wound and cause infection. The bacteria may come from your skin or from the environment, such as soil, air, or water. They may come from the object that caused your wound or from tools used

during the surgery. They may also come from inside the body, where they normally live without doing harm.

What puts me at risk of having a surgical site infection? The risk of having an SSI depends on different factors. These factors include the following:

- **Diseases:** Diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, and liver, kidney, or lung conditions may slow the healing process. Medical conditions, such as low blood protein may also affect healing.
- **Foreign objects:** Dead tissues and foreign objects, such as glass or metal, present in the wound may delay wound healing. SSI may also be likely if you have an infection on another part of the body, or a skin disease.
- **Poor blood or oxygen supply:** Blood flow may be affected by high blood pressure, and blocked or narrowed blood vessels. This may be a common problem in people who smoke, or have blood vessel problems or heart conditions. Low oxygen supply may be caused by certain blood, heart, and lung diseases.
- **Type of surgery:** Your chances of having SSI is increased when surgery is done on an infected wound. Emergency surgeries on traumatic injuries, and surgeries lasting for 3 hours or longer, also increase your risk. This may also include surgeries done on certain body organs, such as the stomach or intestines (bowels). The risk may be greater if an object pierced through the skin and into an organ. SSI is more likely to occur after an open surgery than surgery using a scope. Having drains or blood transfusion may increase the chances of bacteria reaching the wound and causing infection.
- **Weak immune system:** The immune system is the part of the body that fights infection. This may be weakened by radiation, poor nutrition, and certain medicines, such as anti-cancer medicines or steroids. Being overweight, or too young or too old, may also decrease your ability to respond to injury.

What are the signs and symptoms of a surgical site infection?

- A wound that is painful, even though it does not look like it should be.
- High or low body temperature, low blood pressure, or a fast heart beat.
- Increased discharge (blood or other fluid) or pus coming out of the wound. The discharge or pus may have an odd color or a bad smell.
- Increased swelling that goes past the wound area and does not go away after five days. Swollen areas usually look red, feel painful, and feel warm when you touch them.
- Wounds that do not heal or get better with treatment.

Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting

Postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV) is a possible complication after general anesthesia. It is important that you share any past experiences with the Anesthesiologist related to PONV prior to your surgery/procedure. After your surgery/procedure, please be sure to keep your healthcare team informed if you are experiencing PONV so they can help you during this time.