



## *Tips for Safer Surgery*

# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTORS & NURSES BEFORE SURGERY

This tip sheet will help you know what to ask.

One way you can help lower your risk for problems from your surgery is to talk with a member of your surgical care team before surgery about the type of care you should receive. Your care team includes your surgeon, your anesthesiologist and your nurses. Ask your doctor or nurse who you should discuss this tip sheet with and when.

### TO AVOID INFECTION

#### **If I need antibiotics before surgery, when will I receive the antibiotic and for how long?**

Antibiotics should be given within 60 minutes before surgery and should be stopped within 24 hours in most cases. Given properly, antibiotics can greatly lower your chances of getting an infection after surgery.

#### **If hair needs to be removed from the part of my body that is having surgery, what will you use?**

Your doctor or nurse should use clippers to remove hair if needed at the site of your surgery. Using a razor to remove hair before surgery can cause infections because of the risk of leaving small cuts on the skin.

### TO AVOID BLOOD CLOTS

#### **What will you do to prevent blood clots?**

When you have surgery, you are at risk of getting blood clots in your lungs and legs because you do not move while under anesthesia. The more complicated your surgery, the higher your risk. Your doctor will know your risk for blood clots and the necessary steps to take that will help prevent them, such as giving you the right medicine before surgery.

### TO AVOID HEART ATTACKS

#### **I'm on medicine for my heart disease. Should I keep taking it?**

Taking certain medicines together can cause problems. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter things like aspirin and herbal remedies. Your doctor will tell you which medicines you should continue to take and which medicines you should stop taking before surgery.

- If you do not see them do so, ask your care team members to wash their hands before examining you.
- If you have other medical problems, such as allergies or diabetes, tell your doctor about them. These problems could affect your surgery and treatment.
- Patients who smoke get more infections. Talk to your doctor about how you can quit
- Speak up if you have questions or concerns

### QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Be sure to speak with our Surgical Services staff or call 315.713.5323 (8am-5pm) or 315.713.5347 (8am-6pm).