

INFECTION

Infection occurs when a foreign organism (bacteria, virus or fungus) enters your body, reproduces, and causes your immune system to fight against it.

WHY YOU CAN EASILY GET INFECTIONS

You are at risk for various infections because you are taking medications called immunosuppressants that suppress or hold back your immune system, and lower your body's ability to fight infection. You will be prescribed medications to help your body fight off the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that may cause infection. These may include Valcyte, Septra, Nystatin, and Cytovene.

SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

Symptoms of infection include:

- ❖ FEVER, CHILLS, FLUSHED SKIN, INCREASED FATIGUE
- ❖ SWELLING, PAIN, REDNESS AROUND THE INCISION OR T-TUBE (SYMPTOMS NOT PRESENT WHEN YOU LEFT THE HOSPITAL)
- ❖ INCISION FEELS HOT TO THE TOUCH
- ❖ NEW DRAINAGE
- ❖ ODOR FROM THE INCISION
- ❖ CLOUDY URINE
- ❖ BURNING ON URINATION
- ❖ SORE THROAT
- ❖ COUGH

If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your Transplant Team. ☎

HOW TO PREVENT INFECTION

- ❖ Take your medications as prescribed.
- ❖ Take proper care of your incision. Follow the instructions given to you by the nurse.
- ❖ Maintain a WELL-BALANCED DIET. A nutritionist will meet with you before you leave the hospital to help you develop a food plan that meets your individual needs. The nutritionist will also review basic rules about food safety, such as:
 - ❖ Wash your hands before and after handling food.
 - ❖ Wash fruits and vegetables well, even use a drop of soap.
 - ❖ Avoid raw eggs, shellfish, and meat.
 - ❖ Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
 - ❖ Throw food out when in doubt.

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- ❖ Get ADEQUATE REST. You will receive activity guidelines before you leave the hospital.
- ❖ Maintain good personal hygiene. Shower (don't bathe) at least once a day, more if your wound is draining or if you are sweating.
- ❖ If you cut or scrape your skin, clean the area with soap and warm water. Apply a bandaid to keep the area clean and dry.
- ❖ Avoid people who have colds, chicken pox, and the flu.
- ❖ Avoid cleaning bird cages, cat litter, and areas with dog excreta. These have a lot of bacteria and fungi!
- ❖ Avoid sources of stagnant (still) water – denture cup, flower vases, soap dishes, swimming ponds. These are all good places for bacteria to grow.
- ❖ Wear gloves when gardening and wash hands thoroughly when done.