

## Preventing Infections After Surgery

Sometimes, infections can happen after surgery. Before your surgery, you will get a test to see if you have a higher chance of an infection, called Staph.

### What is a Staph infection?

*Staphylococcus aureus*, or “staph” for short, is a very common germ. About 1 out of every 3 people have staph on their skin or in their nose. It does not usually cause any problems for most people who have it on their skin. Sometimes, it can cause serious problems, like pneumonia, or infection of the blood, skin, or a wound.

### Types of Staph Infections

There are two different types of staph infections, called MRSA and MSSA.

### Screening for Staph

Before surgery, you will need to get a test to check for MRSA and MSSA. This is done by swabbing your nose at a lab. If your test is positive for MRSA or MSSA, you will need to use a nose ointment for 5 days before surgery.

### Using the Nose Ointment

You will get a prescription from your surgeon for an ointment, called Mupirocin. The ointment comes in a tube. **Put the ointment on two times a day, once in the morning and once at night, for 5 days before surgery.** If you start less than 5 days before surgery, keep using the ointment after surgery to complete the 5 days.

#### To use:

- Wash your hands.
- Put the ointment in the front part of both nostrils using a clean cotton swab (Q-tip®).
- Press the sides of your nostrils together several times to spread the medicine. Wash your hands when finished.
- Stop using and call your surgeon if you have any swelling, redness, or irritation.



**Remember to wash your hands often, especially after your surgery!**