

## **Surgical Site Infections**

### **What are surgical site infections (SSI)**

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Most surgical site infections are caused by the patient's own bacterial flora. Some surgical site infections are more serious and can involve tissues under the skin, organs, or implanted material.

### **What are the risk factors for SSI?**

The risk of acquiring a surgical site infection is higher if you:

- Are an older adult
- Have a weakened immune system or other serious health problem such as diabetes
- Smoke
- Are malnourished (don't eat enough healthy foods)
- Are very overweight

### **What is surgical site infection prevention?**

One of the ways to prevent surgical site infections is by giving patients an antibiotic within 60 minutes (for usual antibiotics) or within 120 minutes (for an antibiotic known as vancomycin) before they go into surgery. The SSI-prevention indicator will report the percentage of time the health care team gave patients antibiotics within the appropriate time period before the surgery. This will apply only to patients who are 18 years or older who are about to undergo primary hip or knee joint replacement surgery.

### **What determines the rate?**

Number of hip/knee total joint replacement surgeries who received antibiotics within 60-120 minutes of incision, divided by total number of patients who had hip/knee total joint replacement surgeries, multiplied by 100.

### **Hamilton Health Sciences results**

For Hamilton Health Sciences, the most recent quarterly results, Q1 April-June 2020, of the combined percentage of hip/knee joint replacement surgical patients that received prophylactic antibiotic within the appropriate time prior to surgery for eligible hospitals was 100% (55 of 55 joint replacement cases).



**What are we doing to reduce Surgical Site Infections and improve patient safety at Hamilton Health Sciences?**

- Monitoring all primary hip/knee joint replacements patients and implementing appropriate antibiotic selection and antibiotic administration within the appropriate time prior to surgery.
- Improving staff and visitor hand hygiene practices.