

Planning a Hospital Stay?

Written by Ginny Grimsley

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Top-Rated Surgeon Shares Tips for Warding Off Infection

Hospitals can be scary places: They're brimming with bacteria, viruses and fungi -- the last things sick and injured people should be around.

In fact, hospital-acquired infections are the most common complication of a hospital stay, affecting nearly 2 million Americans a year and killing nearly 100,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

"There are a number of public and private initiatives under way to bring those numbers down. Life-threatening MRSA (antibiotic-resistant staph) infections have actually been declining since 2005," says Dr. Marc Stevens, an AMA Physician Recognition Award recipient and formulator of Rapid Recovery (www.DRSHealthInc.com), a beverage mix of nutrients that help tissue heal quickly after surgery or injury.

"The other good news is that there are steps patients can take to reduce the risk of being infected -- and bolster their ability to fight infection. As a surgeon, I make it a priority to educate my patients and the public at large about what they should be doing before and during a hospital stay to protect themselves."

Stevens says patients should always take responsibility for doing what they can to avoid infection and bolster their immune system.

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“Young people, elderly people and those with chronic illnesses – particularly diabetes – are most at risk for being overwhelmed by infection,” he says.

He suggests:

- **Hand washing:** This is the No. 1 precaution recommended by the CDC, Stevens says. “Wash your hands, ask visitors to wash theirs, and don’t be shy about asking hospital personnel, including doctors and nurses, to wash up before treating or examining you.”
- **Monitor your bandages:** Alert a nurse if you notice your bandage is not clean, dry or completely attached to the skin surrounding a wound.
- **Get in the best health possible before a scheduled hospital stay:** People in their best possible mental, nutritional and physical health are better able to ward off infection and their wounds heal more quickly, closing portals to infection, Stevens says. “Whether it’s physical therapy you need, or vitamin supplements – there are 13 with a demonstrated role in healing – patients should do what’s necessary to prepare before going to the hospital, particularly, before a scheduled surgery.”
- **After discharge, watch for signs of infection:** Symptoms that can indicate an infection include unexpected pain, chills, fever, drainage or increased redness around a surgical wound. If you have any of these symptoms, you should immediately contact your doctor.

About Dr. Marc Stevens

Dr. Marc Stevens is an award-winning orthopedic surgeon certified by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons and a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons and the International College of Surgeons. He has been recognized as one of America’s Top Orthopedic Surgeons and a World Leading Physician (International Association of Orthopedic Surgeons.) Dr. Stevens has found optimal nutrition – particularly the 13 vitamins known to promote tissue healing – dramatically speeds surgical patients’ recovery. His flavored Rapid

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Recovery mix of these vitamins offers convenience and better absorption.