Infection Prevention: Symptoms and Treatment

During your recovery in the hospital, you will do all you can to prevent an infection. But it is possible that even with your best efforts, you may still develop an infection. If so, the faster your infection is treated, the faster you can get back on the road to recovery.

Some signs of infection include fatigue – you may feel more and more tired each day instead of steadily getting better, a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, chills, vomiting, or diarrhea.

If you develop an infection at a surgical or wound site you may notice the area feels hot and may be red; the area smells foul; increased swelling around the incision area; tenderness and soreness, and drainage from the wound site.

If you notice any of these signs of infection, tell your healthcare provider right away. You may be put in isolation. If you are in isolation, hospital staff and family members and friends will wear protective gear, like gowns, masks, and gloves when seeing you. Be sure visitors follow these directions each and every time they enter your room.

And to prevent infection from spreading to others, you must wear protective gear when you go outside your room. Treatment depends on the type of infection you have. If it is an infection at the surgical or wound site, you may have to have the area drained.

If it is an infection in your body, you will have tests done to identify the particular infection. Most infections are treatable with some type of antibiotic; although on rare occasions, infections can be resistant to the medications usually used to treat them. For antibiotics to work properly, it is very important you take them exactly as directed. Take the entire prescription. Even if you start feeling better, do not stop taking them until your entire prescription is done.

If you stop taking your antibiotics before you have completed your full dose, you run the risk of developing a drug-resistant infection such as MRSA. Any drug-resistant infection can complicate your recovery and keep you in the hospital longer.

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