

# Infection Prevention

Preventing infections is a priority for Fletcher Allen. University of Vermont Medical Group Orthopedics providers work closely with the Infection Prevention team to provide the highest quality, safest care.

## MRSA/MSSA screenings

We are currently screening the following high-risk groups of total joint replacement patients:

- health care workers
- patients with a history of Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*/ Methicillin-sensitive *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA/MSSA)
- patients who have lived or had close contact with a family member with MRSA or MSSA
- patients with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes
- patients on immunosuppressive therapy
- immuno-compromised patients (hepatitis, HIV)

Patients are screened within six weeks of surgery. If they test positive for either MRSA or MSSA, antibiotic nasal ointment and daily chlorhexidine baths are prescribed for five days before surgery. MRSA-positive patients will also have their pre-operative prophylactic antibiotic changed to vancomycin, which is more effective in treating MRSA.

Our goal is to begin screening **all total joint replacement patients** for MRSA/MSSA during the summer of 2011.

## Pre-surgical dental preventive check-up required

Patients who have ongoing inflammation of their gums are at higher risk for developing infections following joint replacement surgery. At Fletcher Allen, patients who are having joint replacement surgery are required to have a preventive dental examination before their procedure.

## Optimizing the care of diabetes patients

Patients with diabetes are at higher risk for developing infections. We identify patients with diabetes early on in the process, and work as a team to minimize their risk of developing an infection.

## Minimally invasive and small-incision surgery

We offer the latest, minimally invasive techniques for total knee and total hip replacements. These techniques are associated with less discomfort, less blood loss, and a lower risk of complications.

## How to reduce the risk of infection

Here's what patients can do to help reduce their risk of infections:

- Lose weight. Higher body mass index (BMI) is associated with an increased risk of infections. Begin a weight loss regimen before total joint replacement surgery.
- Diabetes patients need to practice good glucose management. Patients with an HgbA1c higher than 7 are at increased risk for developing infections, so it's important for patients with diabetes to carefully monitor and regulate their glucose levels.
- Follow instructions for pre-surgical multi-day scrubs.

For more information, visit:

[www.FletcherAllen.org/QualityOrtho](http://www.FletcherAllen.org/QualityOrtho)