

INFECTION

Every precaution is taken to reduce the risk of infection. You will be given an intravenous (IV) antibiotic before and after your surgery.

BLOOD CLOTS

Blood clots can occur in the veins of your legs after any surgery. These clots can be dangerous. To reduce the risk of clots forming, you may wear stockings or compression devices after your surgery. This will help with the blood flow in your legs. Walking and moving are the best ways to prevent blood clots.

ILEUS

Your bowels may not function as well after surgery. They may slow down, causing abdominal distention or bloating. You will be given bowel stimulants in the hospital. Continue to take an over-the-counter stool softener when you get home. Walking and staying well-hydrated will also help.

PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia is also a risk after surgery because:

- ✓ You will be lying down for a period of time during surgery and your lungs will not be working at their best.
- ✓ The anesthesia may make it harder for your lungs to protect themselves from germs that can cause infections.
- ✓ You will have some discomfort from the incision on your back and may not breathe as deeply. Mucus can build up in your lungs.

RISKS OF SURGERY

Spine surgery is a major surgery. As with any major surgery, there are risks.

You will be taught coughing and deep breathing exercises to help keep your lungs clear and prevent pneumonia. You will also be instructed on how to use an incentive spirometer.

- ✓ Just after you exhale normally, put your lips tightly around the mouthpiece.
- ✓ Breathe in as deeply as you can. The meter will rise.
- ✓ When you feel that you have taken a full breath, keep trying to breathe in more and more for about two seconds.

- ✓ Repeat this deep breath action [10 to 15 times each hour](#) while you are awake. You can see how much air you have taken in by reading the number on the meter. Your breathing technique will improve as you are more awake, have less pain, and move around more. If you have trouble using the spirometer on your own, please ask your nurse for help.

Being active will reduce the risk of infection, blood clot formation, bowel complications, and pneumonia.