

Your Surgery

at New England Baptist Hospital

Caring for Your Surgical Incision During the Summer

The months of June, July, August and September can pose a challenge for care of a surgical incision. This handout provides some tips to help ensure that your surgical incision heals optimally.

Keep your hands clean

Many bacteria that cause infection are spread by the hands. These bacteria can live on healthy skin and are more common during the summer months. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub (i.e. Purell®) regularly, especially before changing your wound dressing or touching your incision.

Avoid water exposure

Although it may be tempting to enjoy the ocean, pool, or other water sources in the summer months, you should refrain from entering water until your surgeon says it is okay, typically after a minimum of six weeks.

Avoid extremes in heat and humidity

Increased sweating during the summer months can result in more bacteria on the skin, which in turn can pose a risk to incision healing. Practice good hygiene by showering as directed by your physician, wearing clean clothes each day and changing bed sheets regularly. Avoid shaving the affected limb for one week before surgery and two weeks after your surgery.

If you have any questions about caring for your incision, please contact your surgeon.