**Incision betrayal**

I’m frustrated. After being on an accelerated path to healing, I woke up last Thursday morning and discovered that my incision from my surgery had sprung a leak and a little droplet of pus was now glaring at me from the top of my new knee. My immediate thoughts had me back in surgery replacing a now infected knee joint. I was so close to having a completely healed incision.

In the world of medicine and surgeries, it’s one of the biggest fears of post-care. Infection! Not a happy word in anyone’s language. I said a couple of choice words as I got out my disinfecting alcohol and wiped it clean and dressed it appropriately as the open wound it had now become. Why after 39 days did this little spot rear it’s nasty head?

That day at therapy, my therapist told me that there’s a no tolerance policy with newly opened wounds. “If it opens or gets infected at any level during your rehabilitation, you go straight back to your doctor.” In fact, he told me, “I’ll be sending a note to your doctor telling him that you will be contacting him regarding it.” That made it sound even more serious. Will this result in amputation now?

Fortunately, living in a small town, I ran into my physician at the Lady Cat basketball game the next evening and threw my knee into his line of vision for a quick inspection. After all, if I was going into surgery for mass infection next week, I wanted him to be in the know and on board with this defection that my incision has created.

I’ll be serious now, I was told that sometimes when internal stitches are used a stitch or two could manifest themselves outwardly and create a little open wound. It’s not uncommon, however it is important to keep an eye on the little devil spot as it continues to heal.

Important things to pay attention to for any open wound are increased pain and redness around the wound, delayed healing, increased heat around the area, becoming more mildly tender or painful, the presence of pus, a foul smell or drainage from the wound.

Since there was a presence of a little droplet of pus on my knee incision, I was told to clean it with alcohol, put on a dab of antibiotic ointment and cover with a band aid.

The most important point is to always keep an eye on your healing incisions and to change bandages every day on wounds.

Other tips to keep in mind when you have a wound or incision:

Always wash your hands, using warm water and soap before touching your incision and changing the dressing.

Use a gentle antibacterial soap when healing from surgery to help prevent infection. Be sure to rinse your incision/wound well.

Do not scrub your wound/incision when you are in the shower. Scrubbing too hard could remove scabs which will slow the healing process and could irritate the incision. Do not allow the incision to be wet too long. Always be gentle, especially when steri-strips or surgical glue has been used. It might appear to be dirty, however do not scrub or rub with a wash cloth. Allow the strips and tape to fall off on their own. Keep the incision dry and allow to completely air dry before covering with a bandage or clothing. Remember that a wet incision is breeding grounds for bacteria.

Drainage from the wound may indicate infection and that is what’s most on my mind, even five days after the initial suture’s betrayal. My little pus droplet is made up of dead tissue, white blood cells and damaged cells. Pus is present when the body begins to fight an infection, sending white blood cells to the source of the problem in order to stop the germs from infecting the tissue. I don’t believe there’s much infection in there, but the pus is letting me know it’s fighting for me.

I’m sure my new knee is OK, no additional surgical procedures in my future at this moment. Just a little set-back in my incision, which only sets back my hot tub soaking time.