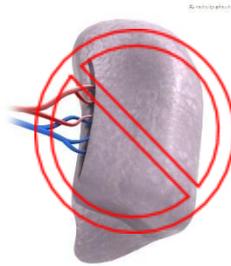


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**Patient Information Sheet:**

**Life after a Splenectomy**

The spleen is an important organ, it helps to filter blood and fight off infection. In some cases the whole spleen or part of the spleen needs to be removed. If this is the case some precautions need to be taken because now your child will be at an increased risk of infection for the rest of their life.



During surgery your child was given an antibiotic through their IV. After surgery the administration of oral antibiotics to splenectomized individuals is the mainstay of infection prophylaxis (and initial therapy). Two complementary strategies are commonly used:

- Daily antibiotic prophylaxis
- Empiric antibiotic therapy for fever, cold or flu like symptoms.

Your surgeons and pediatrician will direct you on which is the best strategy for your child. Things that are taken into account are how old your child is at the time of the surgery, allergies, and if your child is immunocompromised (undergoing chemotherapy for example).

It is recommended for your specific child to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Take a daily antibiotic. A prescription will be given at the time of discharge. Your child will be on this antibiotic every day for at least a year! Make sure to include giving this medication into your daily routine. If your child spikes a fever over 100.4°F (38°C) it is very important to notify your pediatrician (and internal medicine doctor when your child gets older). They will decide the next step or if further work up is needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your child will be sent home with a prescription for an antibiotic, but it does not need to be taken until if/when your child has a fever over 100.4°F (38°C), or if they start to have cold or flu like symptoms. At that point start the antibiotic and call your pediatrician right away. It is probably best practice to fill the prescription now so you have it on hand so it can be started at the first sign of fever or illness.

As stated before, patients who do not have a spleen are at an increased risk of getting serious infections so immunizations become even more important! Talk to your pediatrician about vaccines for your child.

Important ones to discuss are:

- Pneumovax
- Meningococcal Vaccine
- Haemophilus Vaccine
- Flu vaccine

I'll say it again; from here on out it is very important to notify your pediatrician (and internal medicine doctor when your child gets older) of any fevers over 100.4°F (38°C).

If you have any questions give us at Alaska Pediatric Surgery a call. We can be reached day or night at 929-7337.

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