

Splenectomy - 'Having No Spleen'



The spleen helps the body's defence against bacterial infection, so if you have had your spleen removed or irradiated you are at increased risk of infection. The risk is greatest in the first two years after splenectomy but persists throughout life. You will be able to cope with most infections e.g. colds and other virus infections but sometimes serious infection may develop very quickly.

- It is very important that you take extra precautions against severe infection. You need to take a twice daily dose of antibiotics, normally penicillin V.
- Have certain vaccinations – pneumovax, HIB - a special flu vaccine, meningococcal C vaccine plus an annual flu vaccine.
- The immunisations must be renewed with a booster, usually every five years, to make sure you are still protected.

You must consult your doctor immediately if you are ill. Most illnesses are not serious but sometimes a fever, sore throat, severe headache, abdominal pain or rash may be the beginning of a serious infection and early treatment is essential. It is advisable to have a course of antibiotics at home (and to take on holiday) to be used immediately if you develop an infection.

Be sure to seek advice from your doctor before travelling abroad. Extra vaccinations and special precautions to prevent malaria will be necessary for travel to some parts of the world. You may be advised against travelling to areas where there is Falciparum malaria. Animal and tick bites can be dangerous.

It is important that doctors and dentists know that you do not have a spleen. It is essential to carry a card or Medic-Alert disc to alert people in an emergency. These can be obtained from your G.P.



I didn't beat cancer to spend the rest of my life worrying!

Vanessa Moss

visit www.aftercure.org for tips, advice and other useful websites

Keep a record of sites you find useful: