

For Your Safety: Sterile Water Precautions

For specific patients at high risk for infection

Water can contain germs that lead to infection. Sterile water does not have germs.

Sterile water is very important for some patients who are ill and at high risk for infection. Sterile water precautions are added safety measures that can help prevent infection. You may need sterile water precautions if you:

- Are preparing to have a lung transplant
- Have had a lung transplant
- Have had a heart transplant

What to expect

During your hospital stay, you should only drink sterile water. We will give you sterile water to drink. If you have sterile water precautions, we will use only sterile water for patient care activities that involve water, such as:

- Drinking water
- Mouth care including brushing teeth, cleaning dentures, and mouth swabbing
- Breathing treatments
- Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP, BiPAP) therapy and device cleaning
- Wound care

Important information for visitors

Please be aware of the following guidelines during visits.

What the patient can drink

- If a patient asks for water to drink, please let us know. We will give the patient sterile water to drink. **Do not give the patient tap, filtered or bottled water.**
- The patient can drink juice or soda as long as it comes in a sealed container.
- The patient cannot have ice chips. Ice chips are not sterile. Ask the care team for sterile water.

Bathing

The patient may bathe or shower with tap water unless their care team has told them otherwise.

Precautions at home

When you are well enough to be discharged from the hospital, your risk of water-related infection will most likely be low. Therefore, you will no longer need to follow sterile water precautions at home unless instructed by your care team. The care team will give you specific instructions about what to do when you leave the hospital.

If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your nurse or physician.