Preventing Infection: Cleaning your nose with a nasal antibiotic before surgery

What is a nasal antibiotic?
A nasal antibiotic [an-tye-by-AH-tik] is an ointment that kills bacteria in the nose. It is usually put into the nose before surgery to help prevent infection. Intermountain Healthcare uses mupirocin [myoo-PEER-o-sin], which may be sold under the brand name Bactroban.

![Nasal antibiotic](image)

Why do I need it?
Out of every 10 people, 2 or 3 have a bacteria called Staphylococcus [staf-uh-low-CAW-cus] aureus [OR-ee-us] in their noses. This is completely normal. These people are called “carriers” because they carry the bacteria but do not know it. Carriers of this bacteria have a higher risk of infection with this bacteria after surgery. The infection can sometimes be severe and not respond well to antibiotics. Using this antiseptic may lower your risk of getting a Staphylococcus aureus infection.

Do not use nasal antibiotic if you have an allergy to mupirocin. If you’re not sure, ask your healthcare provider if you should use it.

How to use nasal antibiotic
Pick up your prescription from the pharmacy 5 or more days before your surgery and follow the instructions below.

Twice each day:
1. Blow your nose and clean the inside of your nostrils with a tissue.
2. Wash your hands with warm soapy water or use hand sanitizer.
3. Open the tube of mupirocin. Squeeze enough ointment from the tube to coat a cotton swab (about ½ ounce). Put the swab into one nostril and gently move it around the lower part of the nostril in a circular motion. Be sure to touch all surfaces inside the nostril. Do the same thing on other nostril using a clean swab.
4. Gently press the sides of the nose together and massage for 1 full minute so that the ointment is spread throughout the inside of the nostril. Take care not to get the ointment in your eyes.
5. When finished, wash your hands again. Do not blow your nose or put any other products in your nose. Do this twice daily (morning and evening) for 5 days in a row. The final use will be the night before your surgery.

If you have any questions, please ask one of your healthcare providers for help.
For use prior to surgery.