The long-term effects of postoperative surgical site infections (SSIs) on healthcare utilization and costs are typically measured for 90 days postoperatively but their long-term impact is unknown.

### Observational cohort study

Patients in the Veterans Affairs healthcare system who underwent orthopaedic surgeries (N = 96,983)

- SSI within 90 days
- No SSI within 90 days

Difference in healthcare utilization and cost 2 years post-discharge

63% of subsequent surgeries occurred after 90 days

37% of subsequent surgeries occurred within 90 days

The healthcare utilization and high costs for patients with orthopaedic SSIs are sustained for up to 2 years after index surgery.

### Average costs

- For patients without SSIs: $42,125 ± $124,914
- For patients with SSIs: $148,824 ± $268,358

### At 2 years post-surgery

- Adjusted SSIs were associated with greater risk of:
  - Emergency room visits, RR* = 1.18
  - Outpatient visits, RR = 1.29
  - Inpatient admissions, RR = 1.35

- Adjusted costs for patients with SSIs: 68% more compared to patients without SSIs

For patients without SSIs:

$42,125 ± $124,914

For patients with SSIs:

$148,824 ± $268,358

*RR = Relative risk