

KNOW MORE.

A retained surgical item refers to any surgical gauze, instrument, tool or device that is unintentionally left in a patient after surgery.

The current procedure to ensure gauze used during delivery is accounted for necessitates a nurse manually counting the gauze in, and out, during a procedure.

Unfortunately, the count "in" doesn't match the count "out" in 1 out of every 64 procedures.¹ We believe that an informed patient is the best advocate for their own health.

Questions to ask your OBGYN:

1. What methods do you use to avoid sponges being left behind during labor and delivery?
2. How can you assure me I won't have a sponge left behind during labor and delivery?
3. Does the hospital I am delivering at have technology to address sponges being left behind?
4. Are there symptoms that I should be concerned about postpartum as it relates to a left behind sponge?
5. How soon would I know if I had a sponge left behind?

1. Steelman VM, Cullen JJ. Designing a safer process to prevent retained surgical sponges: A healthcare failure mode and effect analysis. *AORN J.* 2011;94(2):132-141.