



Sepsis – Paediatrics

Patient information Leaflet

March 2020

This leaflet aims to help you understand what sepsis is and how we treat and care for children with this condition.

The aim of this leaflet is to answer some of the questions that you or your child may have about sepsis and its treatment.

What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is a rare but serious complication that can occur in individuals who have a bacterial infection in any part of their body and their immune system begins to overreact. Normally the immune system is able to fight off infection from bacteria or viruses from white blood cells alone. However, for reasons yet unknown the immune system can begin to attack the body's own organs and tissues and if left untreated can be fatal.

Therefore, it is important for medical professionals to recognise and consider sepsis early in patients with signs and symptoms.

Signs of Symptoms of Sepsis

Sepsis is usually difficult to spot due to the variety of symptoms. Not one key symptom is specifically associated with sepsis but there are a number of factors which are taken into consideration also known as **red flags**...

- High temperature
- Rapid and Shallow breathing
- Lethargic/Irritable
- Appears mottled (blotchy), pale or grey
- Had a 'fit' or convulsion
- Non Blanching Rash (rash that does not fade when the skin is pressed)
- Cyanosis (blue skin, lips or tongue)

Under 5year old

- Not passed urine in 12 hours
- Vomiting constantly
- Reduced intake

Treatment for Sepsis

When you attend hospital and your child has any of these red flags they will be placed on the sepsis pathway. If sepsis is suspected then your child will require blood tests, urine test and antibiotics until it is confirmed that your child does not have sepsis.

- The initial tests look at infection markers in the blood and to check how hard the body is working. These test results should be processed within 1-2 hours.
- A blood culture will also be taken. This checks to see if any bacteria is present in the blood. This takes 48 hours to be processed.
- A urine sample will need to be collected. This is usually obtained by catching a urine in a pot. Sometimes the doctor may use a catheter (a small tube) to obtain the urine directly from the bladder.
- Your child may require a lumbar puncture which the Doctor's will perform to obtain a sample of spinal fluid to check for infection. If your child requires this your doctor and nurse will speak to you about this.

- The nurse caring for your child will closely observe them and record vital signs such as heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, temperature. Your child may require oxygen whilst in hospital.
- The nurse will be keeping an up to date record of what your child has eaten, drank and when they go to the toilet.
- Intravenous antibiotics will be given to the child through a vein. Doctor's will prescribe different antibiotics depending on the age of child and severity of symptoms and they will commence straight away before blood results are back.
- Your child may require intravenous fluids depending on how much fluid they are tolerating and if dehydrated.
- The Paediatric Doctors are responsible for your child's care within hospital and they will discuss together test results, child's observations and review your child at least once every day keeping you fully informed.
- If your child is well enough they may be sent home to continue the IV antibiotics at home. The Children's Community Nurses will come to your house to administer them.
- IV antibiotics may be discontinued after a couple of doses if no infection is detected from blood results and your child is well.

Who is more at risk of developing sepsis

- New-borns and infants under 3 months of age
- Children with weakened immune system due to illness or medication
- Children with foreign material in their body such as a catheter, central line
- Children with breaks to surface of skin including burns, severe eczema
- Children who have had recent surgery

However, anybody is at risk of having sepsis.

Parent Advice within hospital

Whilst your child is in hospital we understand it can become very distressing for you and your child. You may have a lot of questions regarding the treatment your child is receiving. On the Unit we aim to provide family centred care by involving parents in their child's care and encourage parents to raise any concerns and questions to our Doctors and nurses to keep you fully informed and reassured.

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff.

Useful Contact Numbers:

- Children's Unit 0161 922 5252 (24 hrs)
- Children's Community Team 0161 922 5251 (08.00-20.00 mon-sun)
- NHS Direct 111 (24hr helpline)
- You can also contact your GP for advice.

Useful Websites/information:

- Department of Health (www.dh.gov.uk)
- NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk/conditions)
- NHS institute for innovation and improvement (www.institute.nhs.uk)
- NHS Improvement (www.improvement.nhs.uk)

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

If you require an interpreter, please ask an appropriate person to contact our central booking office between Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm on 0161 922 6991 to arrange this for you.

語言翻譯及病者支持服務 (LIPS):

如果閣下需要翻譯員在您的預約當日幫助您的話 請找一名合適的家庭成員 0161 922 6991 聯絡本中央預約辦事處來您您安排 我們的辦公時間是星期一至星期五 上午 8 時至下午 5 時

Językowo Tłumaczeniowa Usługa Pomocy dla Pacjenta (Language, Interpretation and Patient Support Service LIPS):

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy tłumacza w trakcie swojej wizyty, proszę poprosić odpowiedniego członka rodziny o skontaktowanie się z Centralnym Biurem Zamówień (Central Booking Office), w celu zorganizowania tłumacza pomiędzy poniedziałkiem a piątkiem w godzinach od 08:00 - 17:00 pod numerem 0161 922 6991.

لیٹگوئج، انٹرپرائٹیشن اینڈ پیٹینٹ سپورٹ سروس (Lips)

اگر آپ کو اپنی اپائنمنٹ کے لئے مترجم کی مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ مہربانی اپنے خاندان کے کسی موزوں فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہمارے سنٹرل بنگ آفس سے پیر سے جمعہ 8.00 بجے صبح سے 5.00 بجے شام کے دوران 0161 922 6991 پر فون کر کے اس کا بندوبست کریں۔

References:

Great Ormond Street. (2011). *Septicaemia*. Available: <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/conditions-we-treat/septicaemia>. Last accessed 17th Feb 2020.

The UK Sepsis Trust. (2020). *About Sepsis*. Available: https://sepsistrust.org/about/about-sepsis/?gclid=EAlalQobChMItaHQ_6_X5wIVVuDtCh1HVQQaEAAAYASAAEgLEFPD_BwE. Last accessed 17th Feb 2020.

Children's Health. (2020). *Sepsis in children: Know the signs*. Available: <https://www.childrens.com/health-wellness/sepsis-in-children>. Last accessed 17th Feb 2020.

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