

Sepsis Team

Sepsis

Information for young people, parents and carers

Introduction

The fact sheet is aimed at providing parents and carers with information about a condition called **Sepsis**.

What causes this condition?

- Sepsis is caused when the body has an excessive response to an infection which can cause complications to other organs. In severe cases this can be life threatening.

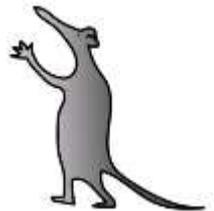
What are the signs and symptoms of Sepsis?

- The symptoms of sepsis can be difficult to spot initially. There is not one key sign or symptom for diagnosing sepsis. Instead a number of factors are taken into consideration such as: heart rate, temperature, breathing, tired / floppy, rash, hot to touch, cold to touch, mottled skin tone, irritability.
- Your child may need to have tests to help identify where the infection is, and what may be causing it. Tests can depend on age and the severity of symptoms. They may be performed either before or soon after starting treatment.

What treatment(s) are available?

The management of sepsis in both ED and on the Wards involves 6 key steps.

- Giving oxygen if required
- Taking bloods – to check infection markers in the bloodstream and if there are bacteria present which may be the cause of sepsis.
- A blood test to see how hard the body is working.
- Giving intravenous antibiotics
- Giving intravenous fluids
- Measuring how much urine is passed after the start of treatment.



Throughout the admission your child's vital signs such as: heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, will be closely monitored.

What are the next steps?

- Your child will be admitted to an inpatient ward.
- A nurse will check your child's: pulse, breathing rate, temperature, blood pressure at regular intervals throughout the day and night.
- Antibiotics will be given through a vein, at times during the day and night. Different intravenous antibiotics are used depending on age and what we believe is making your child ill.
- An up to date record of what your child eats and drinks and when they go to the toilet.
- Doctors will be responsible for your child's care and they will have teams to monitor results and how your child is getting on whilst in hospital.
- Antibiotics may be stopped after a couple of days if no infection is found and your child is well.



- Sometimes other teams who work in the hospital may be asked for advice or support. These teams work closely with all the doctors here at Alder Hey and may become involved in your child's care.

What can happen if my child does not get treatment?

- In severe cases Sepsis can be life threatening and children can die if it is not recognised and acted upon early. It is therefore important for hospital staff to consider sepsis early in patients with signs and symptoms.

What can parents/patients with Sepsis do for themselves?

- We know that being admitted to hospital can be very distressing for you and your child and you may have lots of questions. The Doctors and Nurses will listen to any concerns you have and we hope to make sure you are kept fully up to date with your child's treatment.
- We encourage parents to be involved in their child's care and to try to have a family centred approach to the way we work.
- Raise concerns to staff if you think your child is getting sicker.

Are there any implications for others i.e. infecting other people?

- This can depend on what the cause of the infection may be. The doctors will keep you updated and advise accordingly.

Does anything increase the risk of someone getting Sepsis i.e. family history?

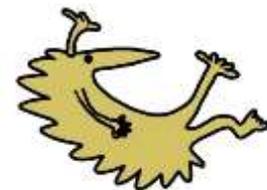
- When a child's immune system is weak due to medicines or illness.
- When a child is very young (less than 3 months) or born early.
- When there is a break to the surface of the skin (burn/ severe eczema)
- When there is a foreign material in the body e.g. catheter, central line.

Are there any common problems that may occur?

- This depends on your infection and the doctors will keep you updated.

Who to contact for further information or support?

- Sepsis Trust
- Patient.co.uk
- Alder Hey Hospital



This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
 Eaton Road
 Liverpool
 L12 2AP
 Tel: 0151 228 4811
www.alderhey.nhs.uk

