

Post Sepsis

Sepsis – what is it?

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming response to an already present infection. It occurs when the body is fighting an infection but starts to attack itself, leading to tissue damage and organ failure. It is a life-threatening medical emergency that requires urgent treatment.



For more information on sepsis please **scan the QR code** or go to <https://pch.health.wa.gov.au/For-patients-and-visitors/Sepsis>

After your child's admission with sepsis

Sepsis affects everyone differently. When a child and family leave hospital, they may still need some support, including:

- Follow up (outpatients) appointments with doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, a speech therapist, dieticians, occupational therapists and/or psychologists.
- Ongoing medications. This may include oral or intravenous (IV) antibiotics, pain relief or other new medication. If required, Hospital in The Home (HiTH) will visit you daily to give your child IV antibiotics. The duration of treatment with any medications and how to access ongoing supplies should have been discussed with you prior to your discharge.
- Some children have wounds that need regular dressings. If required, a nurse will come to your house every few days and perform these dressings.
- Some children won't recover to their previous self as they will have permanent disabilities. You will require long term support from health care providers in the community. This will be arranged by your discharge team.
- Some children will be weak, feel tired and have a lack of energy when they return home. This may mean they will need to rest at home.

Some children experience longer lasting physical, emotional, and developmental problems which is known as post sepsis syndrome. We are still learning about this in children.

Post sepsis syndrome symptoms include:

- headaches or other pain
- changes in appetite
- being more tired than usual
- changes with sleeping patterns or difficulties sleeping
- muscles weakness
- behaviour changes
- difficulty concentrating



- fear of medical procedures and or health professionals.

Families may be traumatised by their child's admission with sepsis. This may not be evident till months later and people may need support from friends, family or a professional.

PCH Post-Sepsis Care Program

To help support you and your family, a staff member from PCH will be in contact. They will be your care navigator after discharge. Quarterly appointments will be arranged via Telehealth to monitor your child's recovery and to support you and your child after discharge. An SMS link will be sent prior to each appointment with some questions about how your child is going.

Will my child get sepsis again?

Most children won't get sepsis again, but there is a slight chance it could occur again. A child may have an increased risk for reinfection. This is due to changes with the body's immune system due to sepsis.

If your child seems sicker than normal to you, trust your gut, seek urgent medical attention and tell the medical team your child has had sepsis before.

Things I can do to prevent sepsis in the future

- Carry out basic hygiene measures like washing your hands with soap and water.
- Make sure your child's vaccinations are up to date.
- Pay close attention to insect bites and skin injuries; see your GP if they are not healing or are red, hot and swollen.
- Tell your school, GP and child health nurse, and any other health professionals that provide follow up that your child has had sepsis.
- Be aware of the symptoms, trust your gut. You know your child best. If they seem sicker than normal, seek urgent medical attention, and ask the question 'could it be sepsis?' Early treatment saves lives.

Useful contacts

- If you need support or are worried about your child after your child's admission, and it's not an emergency, please contact the CAHS Sepsis Program (pch.sepsis@health.wa.gov.au), your GP or discuss any areas of concern at your next outpatient appointment.
- If you need more information about the medication your child is taking, please contact the PCH medicines information service (PCH.PharmacyMedicinesInformationService@health.wa.gov.au). A pharmacist will endeavour to respond to you within one business day. **If you require a response urgently, please call 08 6456 0190 and select option 1.** This service is open

8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday and pharmacists are happy to help with any questions you may have regarding your child's medications.

- Alternatively visit your local community pharmacy, GP, contact the CAHS sepsis program or your discharge team.
- If you need more information on the signs and symptoms of sepsis please go to the sepsis family page: <https://pch.health.wa.gov.au/For-patients-and-visitors/Sepsis> or scan the above QR Code.



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