

# Sepsis Advice Sheet

Name of child: .....

Age: .....

Date/Time advice given: .....

Further advice/Follow-up: .....

Name of professional: .....

Signature of professional: .....



**Red**

- If your child becomes unresponsive
- If your child becomes blue
- If your child is finding it hard to breathe
- If your child has a fit
- If your child develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (see the tumbler test)

**You need urgent help.**

Please phone 999 or go straight to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.



**Amber**

- If your child's health gets worse or if you are worried
- If your child has signs of dehydration including dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, sunken fontanelle (soft spot on the baby's head), drowsiness and seems generally unwell
- The temperature lasts more than 5 days and your child has not seen a health care professional
- If your child is less than 6 months old

**You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.**

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 – dial 111.



**Green**

- If you have concerns about looking after your child at home

**If you need advice.**

Please contact NHS 111 – dial 111.

## Useful information

### Children under the weather?

Search 'Catch app' to download a free NHS local health app for parents and carers of children from pregnancy to age 5.



For more information visit [www.catchapp.co.uk](http://www.catchapp.co.uk) or @catchapp\_uk

**catch**  
Common Approach To Children's Health



### Your Pharmacist



Pharmacists can offer advice and medicines for a range of minor illnesses and most have a room where you can discuss issues with pharmacy staff without being overheard and are trained to tell you when your symptoms mean you need to see a doctor.

To find your local pharmacy and open times visit [www.sthelenscares.co.uk](http://www.sthelenscares.co.uk)



### Need medical advice or help right now?

CALL  
**111**

Use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation. You can also access 111 online at: [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)

Trained advisors are available 24 hours a day and can book you an appointment at the Urgent Treatment Centre, order a repeat prescription or put you in touch with a healthcare professional.

# Sepsis Advice Sheet

## What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is a rare but serious reaction to an infection. If your baby/child gets an infection, their body's immune system responds by trying to fight it. Sepsis is when this immune system response becomes overactive and starts to cause damage to the body itself.

It can be hard to tell if your baby/child has sepsis. They might not even have a fever or high temperature, they may just feel very unwell.

Sepsis needs to be treated urgently because it can quickly get worse and lead to septic shock. Septic shock is very serious, as it can cause organ failure and death.

Anyone with an infection can get sepsis. But some people have a higher chance of getting it than others.

## Who is more at risk of Sepsis?

- Premature babies and babies younger than 1
- Babies/children with diabetes
- Babies/children with weak immune systems e.g. those having chemotherapy, steroid treatment, chicken pox
- Indwelling medical devices e.g. catheters/central lines
- Skin wounds e.g. burns
- Children who have complex health needs
- Children who have neurological conditions
- Children who have recently had surgery or serious illness.

## What are the symptoms?

Sepsis can initially look like flu, gastroenteritis or a chest infection. Babies and children often have a fever or very low temperature (or have had a fever in the last 24 hours). There is no one sign, and symptoms present differently.

A child may have sepsis if he or she:

1. Is breathing very fast
2. Has a 'fit' or convulsion
3. Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
4. Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
5. Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
6. Feels abnormally cold to touch

A child under 5 years of age may have sepsis if he or she:

1. Is not feeding
2. Is vomiting repeatedly
3. Hasn't had a wee or wet nappy for 12 hours

## Sepsis Advice Sheet... continued

### Is it likely that my baby/child has Sepsis

It's important to remember that not everyone who gets sepsis has a high temperature or fever. So if your baby/child feels very unwell but has a normal temperature you should still speak to your healthcare professional.

If your baby/child is likely to be more at risk of sepsis or if it looks as though they might have an infection, your healthcare professional should think about whether they might have sepsis.

They should check for anything that could mean your baby/child might have sepsis, such as:

- feeling or acting differently than normal
- problems with, or changes in, your circulation (blood flow)
- problems with, or changes in, your breathing.

As sepsis can be hard to spot, anything you can tell your healthcare professional can help them to help your baby/child.

They should also ask about how your baby/child has been lately and if they have had any recent illnesses or injuries.

Depending on your answers to the questions, the healthcare professional may also check your baby's/child's heart rate, blood pressure and breathing.

They will use all the information they collect to decide:

- whether your baby/child has suspected sepsis,
- how high your risk is of life-threatening illness from sepsis, and
- if your baby/child needs to have urgent treatment or more checks.

### Looking for Sepsis in babies and children

If your healthcare professional decides that your baby/child might have sepsis they should:

- ask you if they have been acting differently
- ask you if they seem more upset
- ask if they have been crying in a different way
- ask if they seem a lot more sleepy than normal
- ask how many wet nappies they've had, or how often they have gone to the toilet
- check their temperature, breathing and heart rate
- make sure they're responding to what's going on around them.

They will also look for signs of infection, such as:

- blue skin, lips or tongue (this is called cyanosis)
- a blotchy (mottled) or very pale or grey (ashen) appearance
- cold hands or feet
- a rash that doesn't go away when you press on the skin (non-blanching).

As a parent or carer you know your child best. If you feel your child is still not well or isn't getting better you should seek medical help even if they've been seen by a healthcare professional already.