



MY GUIDE TO SEPSIS AND THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

A Guide For Children with a
Loved One Who Has Sepsis



Do you know someone who is sick with sepsis (SEP-sis)?

It can seem scary when the adults in your life are busy and you don't know what is happening. Sometimes you might have questions, such as:

What's the problem?

Will _____ be okay?
(fill in the name, such as Grandma, Daddy, etc.)
Who will be taking care of me?



The adults around you don't always have time to answer or maybe they don't know the answers. Bug, the ladybug, wants to help teach you about sepsis. She also wants to explain what you might see in the hospital and things you might do for _____. We hope Bug helps you and your family.

Sepsis is a serious illness. _____ could be in the hospital for a few days, or much longer. The hospital is where _____ will get medicine and treatment for sepsis.



What is sepsis?

Sepsis is an illness. It is caused by an infection (in-FEK-shun).

Infections are caused by germs. Germs are so small you can't see them. Bacteria (BAK-teer-ee-uh), viruses (VY-rus-iz), fungi (FUNG-guy) and parasites (PAR-uh-sites) are all germs. They can make you sick with illnesses like the flu or an ear infection.

Most of the time, you get better from an infection. It may go away by itself after you stay home and rest. Or, you might need medicine like antibiotics (an-tie-by-o-tics) to make the infection go away. But sometimes, people have trouble fighting an infection. So they get sicker from the infection, instead of better. This is sepsis. Sepsis needs to be treated quickly.

You cannot get sepsis from someone who has sepsis. It is not contagious (con-TAY-juhs), which means you can't catch it. Colds and the flu are contagious. If someone you are close to has a cold or the flu, you might catch it. But sepsis itself isn't contagious.

In The Hospital

Patients with sepsis are in the hospital because they are very sick. They need special attention from the people who work in the hospital. The sickest patients in the hospital stay in the intensive care unit, or ICU.

An ICU is a busy place. There can be a lot of machines. Some make noise. Some beep. Some have flashing lights. Some have lots of wires and tubes. These noises and tubes may be confusing or seem scary, but they all have a purpose. Let's learn about what you might see.



At The Hospital

Hospitals may have special visiting hours for children, especially in an ICU. You might want to visit more often, but the doctors and nurses need time to care for _____. Ask the adult caring for you when you can visit. While you wait to visit, maybe you can draw some pictures or write about how you are feeling on this page or in a journal.



At The Hospital

Who are some of the people you might see in an ICU?
There are many people who work in an ICU. The people you see most are:



Doctors: The doctors in the ICU are specialists, which means they are experts in taking care of the sickest patients. You might see more than one doctor taking care of _____ as they help each other.



Nurses: The nurses in ICUs have special training for the sickest patients. _____ will have a nurse who will keep close watch. The nurses give medicines, do treatments, and make sure that the whole team knows how the patients are. If you have questions and the nurse is in the room, he or she may be best person to ask if your parent or guardian can't answer them. If the nurse is too busy, you may have to wait a little while though. If _____'s nurse has to leave for a meal or go home, another nurse takes over. There is always someone caring for the patients.



Physical Therapists (FIZ-i-kuhl THER-uh-pists):

If you see someone trying to get patients to move around in bed, even if they don't look like they can, this could be the physical therapist or PT. PTs help patients keep their muscles strong. They help patients move and get out of bed as fast as possible, even if it is just to sit in a chair. This helps them heal faster.



Respiratory Therapists (res-per-UH-tor-ee THER-uh-pists): Some ICU patients have special machines to help them breathe. These are called ventilators (VEN-ti-lay-tors). Respiratory therapists help take care of the patients and their ventilators, and give breathing treatments.

What are some of the machines or equipment you might see?

Sometimes it can seem like there are more machines than people in an ICU. The beeps and alarms on the machines help the nurses. Some beeps are urgent and the nurses come right away. Other alarms or beeps aren't urgent, so the nurses may not come right away. You can ask the nurse about the noises if you're curious.

Here are some of the things you might see:



Electric Bed

Buttons on an electric bed can make the top (head) and the bottom (feet) go up and down. Another button can make the whole bed go up and down. It's important not to make the bed move without permission because it could make _____ uncomfortable or disturb some of the tubes or machines.



Call Bell

Every patient has a small button attached to their bed. They can push this button to call a nurse. The nurse might be busy at the desk or in another room, so it's important not to play with a call bell in case it goes off when you don't want it to.





Monitors (MON-i-ters)

Monitors are like smoke detectors at home. Instead of warning about smoke, the monitors tell nurses how fast their patients are breathing, how fast their heart is pumping, and more. Sometimes monitors start beeping or making noises.



Ventilator

This machine helps patients breathe if their lungs aren't working properly. Ventilators push air into the lungs. When the patient can breathe alone, the ventilator is taken away.



Intravenous (in-TRA-vee-nus) Pumps

You might see tubes going into _____'s arms or other body parts. Patients in an ICU usually need fluids and medicines to go straight into their body instead of swallowing them. Intravenous (IV) tubes do this for them. The tubes are attached to bags of fluid and medications. The tubes are also attached to IV pumps. These pumps control how fast the fluids and medicines move through the tubes. These fluids and medicine work to make patients feel better. The pumps also make noises to alert nurses when the bags are empty or a tube is blocked.



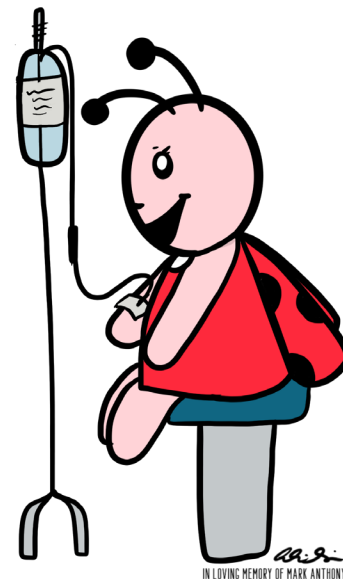
Oxygen (OK-si-jen) Meter

A tiny device on the tip of a finger measures how much oxygen is in your blood. Oxygen is part of the air we breathe. The meter doesn't hurt. It sits on the end of a finger or sometimes the ear lobe. The full name of the device is a pulse oximeter (OK-si-me-ter).



Breathing Tube

If patients need a ventilator, they will have a breathing tube, called an endotracheal (end-o-tray-kee-al) tube placed in their mouth. Patients can't talk when the tube is there. But if they are awake, they might be able to communicate by pointing, or writing on paper or a device.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARK ANTHONY II

There may be other machines or tubes too. If you are curious, ask the nurse what they are called and what they do.

Remember any time you aren't sure about something, or you see or hear something that worries you, ask an adult in the room.

What To Do When Visiting

_____ is very sick. When patients in an ICU seem to be sleeping, they may still be able to hear their visitors and know they are there. Here are some things you can do to help _____ .



1. Wash your hands well with soap and water before going in the room. Dry them well too. This is very important. Washing and drying your hands will help keep more germs away from all the patients.



2. Talk to _____ even if he or she seems to be sleeping. You can tell him or her about your day or you can even read a story you brought with you or one you wrote. You might even want to sing one of your favorite songs. The important thing is to use a quiet, kind voice.



3. Touch _____ if you want to and can. Ask the nurse if you can hold his or her hand or touch part of their body, like their arm. If you're scared or nervous, ask the nurse to show you what you can do. Just make sure you wash your hands first, even if you did when you came into the room.

You might be asked to leave the ICU room if the nurses have to take care of _____ , like helping him or her go to the bathroom or to change machines or tubing.

Sometimes, sick people get sicker and it can happen fast. The doctors and nurses work better without extra people in the room so you may be asked to wait in the hallway or a waiting room. If you have to go home, the adult taking care of you might call the hospital later to see how _____ is feeling and when you can visit again.



When

can go home.

Is _____ ready to come home?

Congratulations! This is good news. Patients still need time to rest and recover, but going home is great. They may still need to take medicines. Nurses might come visit or they may have to go to the doctor or clinic.

Although _____ may be happy to be at home and enjoy seeing family and friends, there may also be some negative feelings, such as:

- Sleep a lot
- Only have enough energy for short activities
- Eat only small meals or snacks
- Feel sad
- Feel nervous, anxious, or scared
- Get angry easily
- Have pain or not feel well




Some people who come home from the hospital after having sepsis still have problems and still need treatment. If you're worried about the care _____ needs, talk to the adult caring for you. It may take many weeks, sometimes longer, for people who had sepsis to recover. They may also be worried about getting sick again or the people around them getting sick.

If you want to help, ask _____ or the adult caring for you what you can do. You might want to do the same things you did in the hospital, such as reading, watching TV, talking about your day, singing, or just snuggling.

You can also try to help _____ from getting another infection. Keep washing your hands every time you spend time together, especially if you are bringing something to eat or drink. If you need to cough or sneeze, do it in your elbow instead of in the air or in your hand. If you're sick, stay away for a while to keep the germs away. If you think _____ is getting sick again, mention it to the adult caring for you.

Sepsis can be frightening. Visiting the hospital or taking care of someone at home can be scary too. The important thing is to ask questions so you can try to understand what is happening.



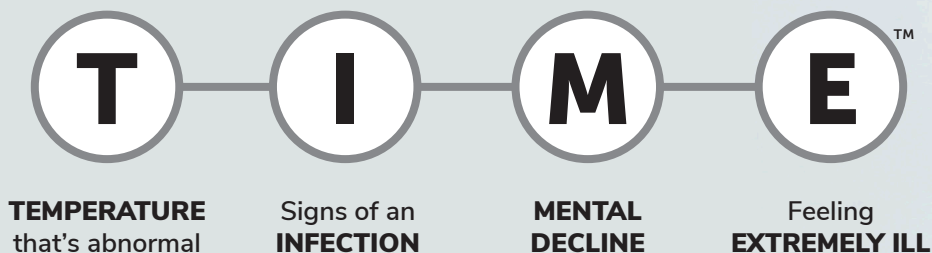


You may have learned many new words today.
See how many of them you can find in this word
search puzzle.

S	A	H	B	C	T	R	M	J	E	Y	S	C	N	Y
T	U	U	O	H	I	D	A	W	Z	V	G	S	O	Y
L	V	R	V	S	D	T	M	E	P	T	G	G	I	Q
D	W	I	I	R	P	M	O	U	B	J	B	E	T	U
Q	P	R	W	V	M	I	V	I	C	I	T	W	C	G
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M	E	D	I	C	I	N	E	R	L	M	T	R	N	E
B	U	G	S	U	O	N	E	V	A	R	T	N	I	M
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B	R	Z	T	E	C	W	W	X	Z	G	R	N	Y	N
W	B	K	P	A	I	Y	H	L	N	W	J	Z	T	I
A	U	S	B	H	M	W	B	F	Q	C	Z	D	G	T
G	I	Q	E	J	O	D	Q	N	E	G	Y	X	O	O
S	G	A	G	U	Q	V	M	Q	O	Q	H	J	Z	R

ANTIBIOTIC
BACTERIA
BUG
GERM
HOSPITAL
ICU
INFECTION
INTRAVENOUS
MEDICINE
MONITOR
OXYGEN
SEPSIS
VIRUS

With sepsis, remember:
IT'S ABOUT TIME™



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sepsis.org

Please note that information in this guide about intensive care units (ICU) and their practices is of general nature, and all ICUs have their own policies and procedures regarding issues such as visiting hours, speaking with staff, and more. If your family member has been admitted to an ICU, ask if a staff member if the unit has an ICU orientation or information sheet, which may list all pertinent information.

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