

Post Sepsis:

What You as a Survivor Need to Know

What is sepsis? Sepsis is a complication caused by the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to an infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

How will I feel at the SNF?



You have been seriously ill, and your body and mind need time to get better. Upon admission to the SNF you may experience physical symptoms such as:

- General to extreme weakness and fatigue.
- Breathlessness.
- General body aches or pains.
- Difficulty moving around.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Weight loss, lack of appetite, food not tasting normal.
- Dry and itchy skin.
- Brittle nails.
- Brittle hair.
- Unsure of yourself (difficulty making decisions).
- Not caring about your appearance.
- Wanting to be alone, avoiding friends and family.
- Flashbacks, bad memories.
- Confusing reality (e.g., not sure what is real and what is not).
- Feeling anxious, more worried than usual.
- Having a hard time concentrating.
- Depressed, angry, unmotivated.
- Frustration at not being able to do what you normally can do (e.g., not able to bathe yourself).

Recovery steps



After you have had sepsis, rehabilitation usually starts in the hospital. The purpose of rehabilitation is to restore you back to your previous level of health or as close to it as possible. Begin your rehabilitation by building up your activities slowly, and rest when you are tired. You have been seriously ill, and your body needs time to get better.

- Your healthcare provider will prescribe a treatment plan.
- During your care planning conference, set small, achievable goals for each week with the staff.
- Follow activity restrictions that your healthcare provider recommends.
- Rest and rebuild your strength. Try to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Always feel free to ask any questions you have to your doctor, nurses, or any staff member.

When should I or my family member call for my nurse or certified nursing assistant (CNA)?



Notify your caregiver if you:

- Feel warm or hot.
- Are very cold or shivering.
- Have skin that is pale or discolored.
- Have pain and body aches that are worse than normal.
- Have nausea or vomiting.
- Have a fast or skipping heartbeat.
- Feel dizzy when you stand up or feel like you are going to faint.
- Are sleepy, hard to wake up.
- Feel confused or have difficulty finding words.
- Have shortness of breath.
- Have redness, swelling, pain, warmth, or drainage of pus from any wounds or intravenous (IV) site.
- Feel like you might die.

Appointments



- The SNF will make sure you have follow-up appointments scheduled with your healthcare provider.
- Talk with your provider about any questions or fears you or your family members have.

Measures you can take to reduce the risk of infections and sepsis:



- Vaccinate against preventable infections such as flu, pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19.
- Have a healthy lifestyle and practice good hygiene.
- Regularly and thoroughly wash hands with soap (e.g., after using the toilet, after cleaning your nose, or after coming in contact with animals or raw meat).
- Pay attention to insect bites and skin injuries.

References:

CDC. Life After Sepsis Fact Sheet. Accessed on: July 11, 2024. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/sepsis/media/pdfs/life-after-sepsis-fact-sheet-508.pdf>

Indiana Patient Safety Center of the Indiana Hospital Association (IHA). IHA Sepsis Patient and Family Discharge Education. Version 2. September 7, 2021. Accessed on: July 12, 2024. Available at: <https://www.ihaconnect.org/Resources/Public/Patient%20Safety/2021%20Sepsis%20Awareness%20Month/IHA%20Sepsis%20Patient%20Discharge%20Education%20Final.pdf>

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