



NEWBORN EMERGENCY TRANSPORT SERVICE: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Infection/sepsis
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Newborn Emergency Transport Service
King Edward Memorial/Princess Margaret Hospitals
Perth Western Australia
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INFECTION/SEPSIS

Background

Newborn babies are more prone to developing infections because of their immature immune systems. Infections can result in blood-stream infection, pneumonia (chest infection), gut infections or meningitis (brain infection).

Which babies get infections?

Babies who are born early are most at risk of infection. The risk of infection may also be increased if the mother's water breaks more than 24 hours before delivery, if she has high temperatures during labour, if she had group B streptococcus (GBS) or has infection of the amniotic fluid or placenta.

How do we treat infections?

If we suspect your baby has an infection we will need to do some investigations to find the source. These may include a blood test, urine test, chest X-ray and a lumbar puncture (to sample the spinal fluid).

We will insert an IV into one of your baby's veins and give him antibiotics and fluids.

How long will my baby be sick?

Most babies will need intravenous antibiotics for between 3-7 days; in some cases, when the infection is more severe or when there is meningitis, antibiotics need to be continued for up to 3 weeks.

Are there any complications?

Generally, if antibiotics are started quickly, babies recover well. Babies who have a severe infection may become dehydrated and have difficulty with their breathing and blood pressure. We may need to support their breathing with oxygen, continuous pressure via nasal prongs (CPAP) and occasionally placing them on a breathing machine (ventilator.) Babies who have meningitis can develop seizures (fits) which may require medications.

Are there any long-term problems?

Most babies with this condition grow up without any long-term problems. However if your baby had meningitis he may have problems with their development. We will monitor their development closely once he is discharged.

This information is intended as a guide only. If you have any concerns, please feel free to discuss with the NETS doctor retrieving your baby.