

Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program

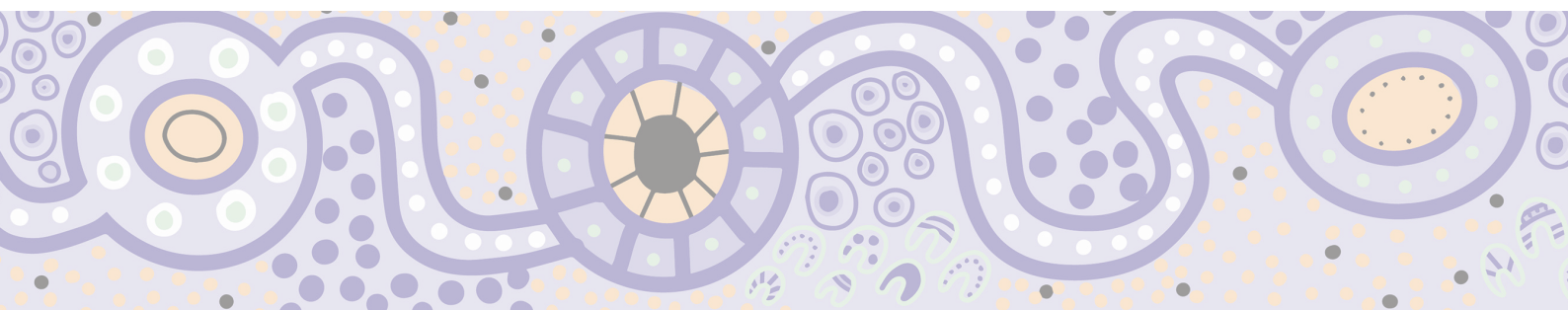
# Paediatric Sepsis

## Health Promotion Pack



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# Introduction

## Who is the Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program?

The Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program (QPSP) is an innovative, multidisciplinary program aimed at reducing the burden of sepsis on families, clinicians and the health system. In strong partnership with consumers, the QPSP is delivering a world-leading holistic approach to paediatric sepsis.

## What is paediatric sepsis?

Sepsis happens when the body is fighting an infection, but it starts to attack its own tissues and organs. It can be caused by any infection and can damage many parts of the body. Sepsis is a **medical emergency** and a leading cause of death and disability for Queensland children. A third of children who survive sepsis suffer long-term physical and mental impairments which also affect their families, the community and the health system.

While sepsis can affect anyone at any age, young children are at greater risk. Across the world, 40 per cent of all sepsis cases are in children under five. The best chance of getting better from sepsis is to treat it quickly, yet only 23% of Australians are aware of the symptoms. We need your help to increase community awareness and education about paediatric sepsis and empower parents and caregivers of sick children to ask the question, **“Could it be Sepsis?”**

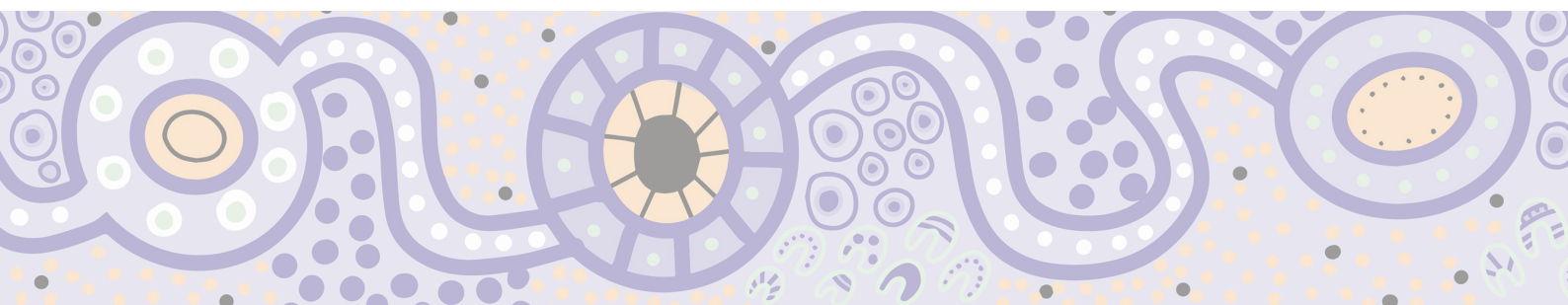
Whether you are a workplace, a sports club, a school or community group, the QPSP have developed this digital health promotion pack with ready-made content and links for you to share across your platforms where it will reach parents and caregivers of children. The pack includes awareness and educational resources, support options for families affected by paediatric sepsis and stories from families who have a lived experience of paediatric sepsis.

The lack of knowledge about sepsis makes it the number one preventable cause of death worldwide and a global health priority.

Thank you for your valuable contribution in the fight against paediatric sepsis!

**COULD IT BE**

**SEPSIS?**





## MIA

*One Friday afternoon, 4-year-old Mia complained of a sore belly. After a diagnosis of gastro by her GP on Saturday morning, a further diagnosis of Influenza B and Viral Myositis by the hospital Emergency Department on Saturday afternoon, Mia was sent home to rest.*

*On Sunday, a faint purple rash appeared, sepsis had set in.*

*Mia spent six days in intensive care, fighting for life.*

*Mia survived sepsis, however, lives with a permanent disability as a quadruple amputee due to the injuries sustained from her journey with sepsis.*

*Mia's story: [Movement for Mia](#)*

## Sepsis awareness initiatives

Observed annually, **Paediatric Sepsis Week** and **World Sepsis Day** are internationally recognised initiatives of the Global Sepsis Alliance. These initiatives are aimed at increasing sepsis awareness and showing support and solidarity with the millions of people worldwide whose lives have been affected by sepsis.



**Global  
Sepsis  
Alliance**

- **Paediatric Sepsis Week – 3rd week of April**
- **World Sepsis Day – September 13th**

Use Paediatric Sepsis Week and World Sepsis Day as an opportunity to increase education and awareness by sharing the content of this pack.

The content remains relevant, and we encourage you to share it at any time.



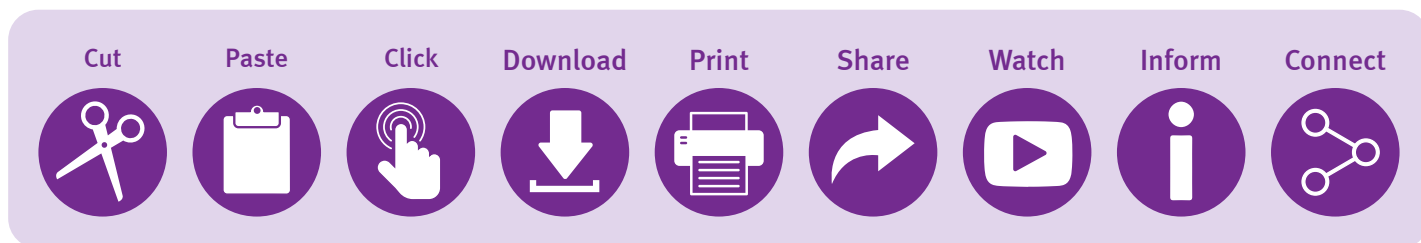
**WORLD SEPSIS DAY – SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**  
BE PART OF THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT - JOIN AT [WORLDSEPSISDAY.ORG](http://WORLDSEPSISDAY.ORG)

The best way to **stop sepsis** and **save lives** is to raise awareness.  
Please share this pack with your networks, colleagues, friends and family.

## How to use this health promotion pack

Look for these symbols to prompt you with what action to take with the content in each section of the pack.

Pick and choose the content you wish to share and cut, paste, download, print, share, watch, inform and connect as relevant to your platform. Images and blue text are hyperlinked to the applicable resource, click to open.



## How you can raise sepsis awareness

Share content on your social media platforms



Spread the word by sharing sepsis awareness videos, infographics and hashtags across your social media platforms.

Copy and paste from one of the options below to create your post:

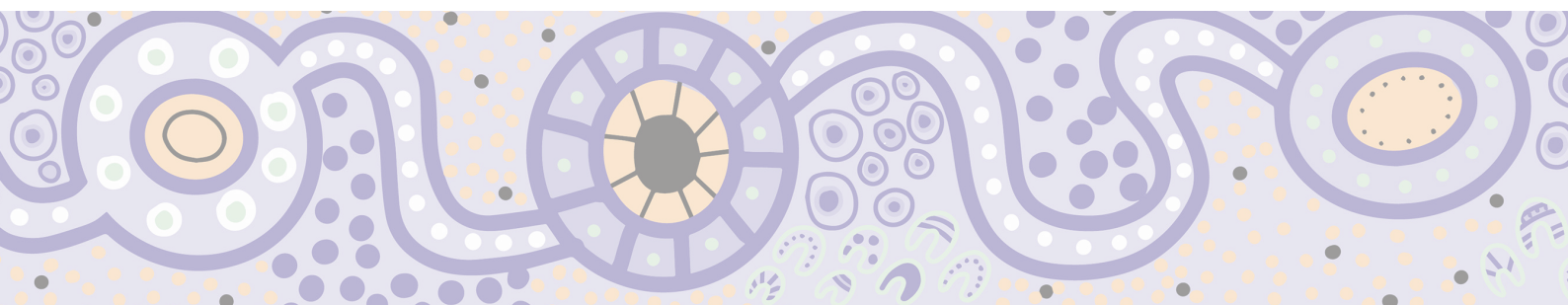
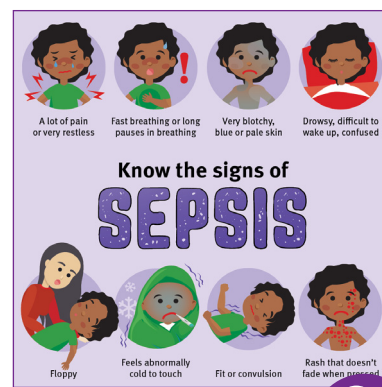
1. [Insert name of your organisation] is proud to support **#WorldSepsisDay** OR **#PaediatricSepsisWeek** to raise awareness of #sepsis. Use the @ChildhealthQLD resources and ask, 'Could it be sepsis?' [Sepsis | Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service](#) #paediatric #sepsisawareness #coulditbesepsis?

**OR**

2. Do you know the signs and symptoms of #sepsis? Join the **#WorldSepsisDay** OR **#PaediatricSepsisWeek** sepsis awareness campaign to help raise awareness and improve recognition of the signs. #paediatric #sepsisawareness #coulditbesepsis?

**AND**

3. Click on the images to include with your social media post.



## Display sepsis awareness infographics

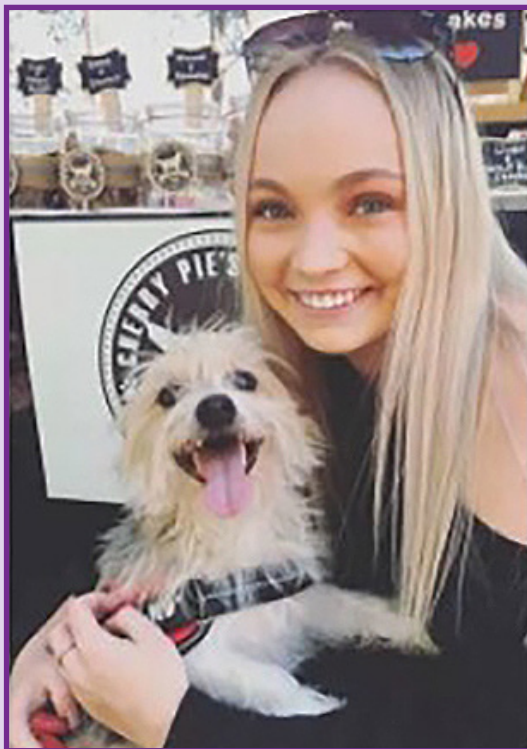


Download infographics for your organisation to display on your digital screens or in your physical spaces:

- [Infographics](#) – Know the signs of sepsis
- [Poster](#) – Do you know the signs of sepsis in children?
- [Postcard](#) – Do you know the signs of sepsis in children? (*Available in 10 languages*)

A range of resources to suit your needs are available for download from:

- [World Sepsis Day Toolkit](#) – Global Sepsis Alliance
- [Paediatric Sepsis Week](#) – Sepsis Alliance
- [Sepsis Australia](#)
- [Sepsis Campaign](#) – Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in HealthCare



### MADDY

*As an 18-year-old Honours Law student, Maddy was intelligent, beautiful, very independent, wickedly funny with sarcastic undertones (sometimes irreverent) and a great lover of all of God's creatures, in particular dogs. Maddy was larger than life, a high achiever that typically got what she wanted, through sheer dedication and perseverance.*

*Maddy contracted Influenza and just over one week later died from Sepsis.*

*Please educate yourself, your family and friends about Sepsis. Share Maddy's story. Get the flu shot, know the signs of sepsis and if concerned always ask, 'Could it be Sepsis?'*

*Damian, father of Maddy (1998–2017)*

[Maddy Jones Foundation for Sepsis Prevention](#)



## Could it be Sepsis?

Sepsis happens when the body is fighting an infection, but it starts to attack itself. It can be caused by any infection (viral, fungal or bacterial). Sepsis can damage the heart, blood vessels, lungs, kidneys and blood clotting systems, and can even cause death.

Sepsis is **time critical**, the best chance of getting better is to treat it quickly.

Symptoms can vary between children and often mimic that of other illnesses such as flu or gastro, making sepsis difficult to recognise. We want you to **know the signs of sepsis** in babies and children.

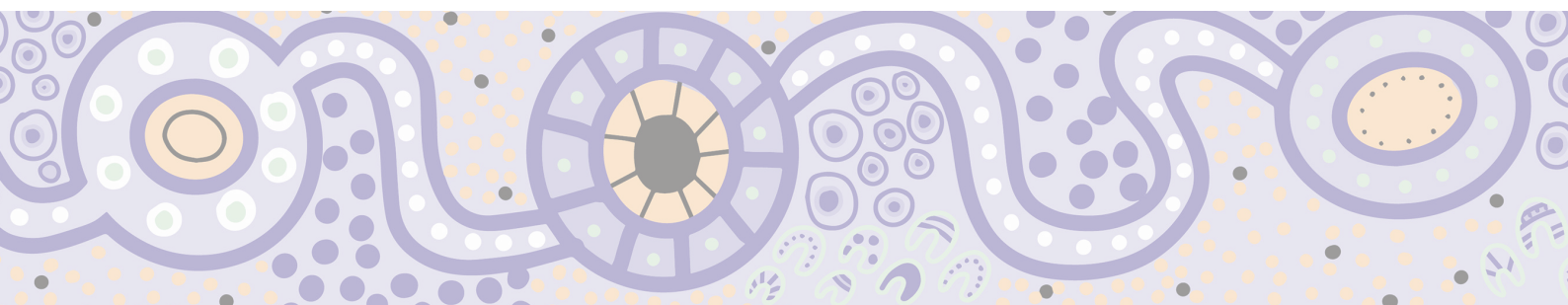
Any one (or more) of these symptoms may mean your child needs urgent medical care:

- A lot of pain or very restless
- Fast breathing or long pauses in breathing
- Very blotchy, pale or blue skin
- Drowsy, difficult to wake up, confused
- Floppy
- Feels abnormally cold to touch
- Fit or convulsion
- Rash that doesn't fade when pressed

Remember that sepsis is a **medical emergency** and is a leading cause of preventable death and disability in children. You know your child best, if you are concerned that they are more unwell than ever before, or this illness is different from other times – just ask your doctor or nurse **“Could it be Sepsis?”**

For more information visit [Sepsis | Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service](#)

COULD IT BE  
**SEPSIS?**



## Host a sepsis awareness activity or event



A range of ideas and resources are available to assist you in hosting your sepsis awareness activity or event. Your activity may be simply sharing content online or you may wish to host a physical event. There is something to suit all ages, ideals and organisation types in the list below.

No sepsis awareness activity is too big or too small.

### Online activities:

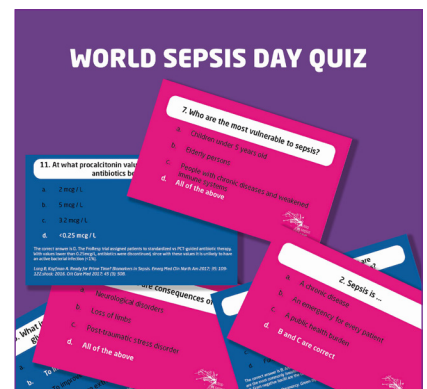
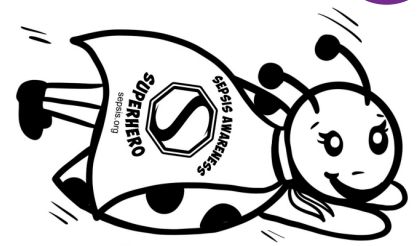
- Share sepsis awareness content with your friends, family and colleagues:
  - » Post the [animation](#) or [infographics](#) to social media
  - » Distribute the [education](#) for parents and caregiver's resources through your networks
  - » Publish the [article](#) in your newsletter
- Participate in the [World Sepsis Day Photo Challenge](#) on social media

### Activities for children:

- The [Bug Colouring Book for sepsis prevention](#) from the Global Sepsis Alliance is a fun and educational activity aimed at younger children
- Watch the [‘Is it Sepsis?’ song](#), and do the [‘Is it Sepsis?’ colour in activities](#) from T for Thomas, ideal for older children

### Activities for all ages:

- [‘Steps for Sepsis’](#), dedicate a walk, run or other sporting event to raising sepsis awareness by wearing something pink or purple
- [‘Sips for Sepsis’](#), dedicate a morning tea to raising sepsis awareness with pink or purple food
- Hold a sepsis awareness stall at your organisation with sepsis [postcards](#) and [fact sheet](#) handouts
- Test your organisation with the [World Sepsis Day Quiz](#)





## Public Awareness Event:

- Lobby your local council to illuminate a building, landmark or sports field for World Sepsis Day:
  - » **Pink** (colour of the Global Sepsis Alliance)
  - » **Purple** (colour of the Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program)
- Get the media involved to promote and provide coverage of your event.



## PRESTON

*In 2003, Preston, was diagnosed with pneumonia, which caused an acute lung injury. This injury allowed a secondary infection to take hold which led to sepsis.*

*Within hours, beautiful little Preston sadly passed away.*

*Preston's mum Mary believes that you know your child better than anyone, so it is critical that you tell health professionals any concerns you have and don't be afraid to ask, "Could it be sepsis?"*

*Preston's family outside the Brisbane City Hall, in pink for World Sepsis Day 2021*

**What ever you choose to do, we'd love you to share it with us.**

**Use these hashtags on your social media posts**

**#paediatric**

**#sepsis**

**#sepsisawareness**

**#coulditbeseptis?**

**or email your pictures to [paediatricsepsis@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:paediatricsepsis@health.qld.gov.au)**

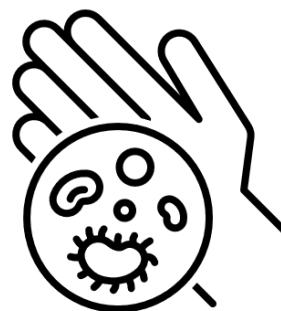
# Education for parents and caregivers

## How can you protect your child from sepsis?



As sepsis is caused by an infection, preventing infection is the best way to protect your child from sepsis. While infection cannot always be prevented, the following strategies can help to minimise the spread of germs and reduce your risk of infection:

- Keeping scrapes and cuts clean, dry and covered
- Washing hands regularly and maintaining sanitation
- Covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Staying at home if you are feeling unwell
- Keeping vaccinations up to date



## Sepsis in babies and children video resources



CPR Kids have teamed up with the QPSP to deliver Q&A style video education sessions on sepsis in babies and children.

Click on the links to learn the facts you need to know about sepsis and hear about Mia's and Tayla's journey through sepsis.

- [Sepsis in babies and children: Common infections, red flags and prevention](#)
- [Sepsis in babies and children: The facts you need to know about sepsis](#)
- [Sepsis in babies and children: Mia's story](#)
- [Influenza in babies and children: What you need to know](#)
- [Sepsis in babies and children: Looking after you](#)
- [Sepsis in babies and children: The facts and your questions answered](#)
- [Sepsis in babies and children: The facts every parent and carer need to know](#)
- [Sepsis and Flu: Jo and Tayla's story](#)





Information resources are available to you if you are concerned that your child is unwell, or if your child has received a diagnosis of sepsis.

If your child is sick and they are not getting better, or they are getting sicker, trust your gut feeling:

- [Could it be sepsis factsheet and paediatric sepsis checklist](#)

If your child has been diagnosed with sepsis:

- [Sepsis information for parents, carers and families of children with sepsis](#)
- [Information for parents, carers and families of children with sepsis](#)
- [Guide for consumers: Sepsis Clinical Care Standard 2022](#)

### Paediatric Sepsis checklist

If you think your child is not getting better, or they are getting sicker, trust your gut feeling. Tick the boxes that apply to your child and ask your doctor or nurse "Could it be sepsis?".

<p><b>Temperature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shivering or shaking with a fever</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low temperature (less than 36°C)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For children older than 3 months, high temperature (more than 38°C) for 5 days or more</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For babies 3 months or younger, any high temperature (more than 38°C)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The headache, neck, muscle, chest, bone or joint pain for no obvious reason</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pain relief is not working</li> </ul>
<p><b>Breathing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grunting noises when breathing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Working harder to breathe – sucking under the ribs or caving in of the breast bone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nostrils that move in and out (flare) with each breath</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Crackly noises from the chest</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cold hands and feet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skin painful to touch</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bright red skin all over</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rash</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity and movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can't concentrate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can't stay awake</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No interest in playing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No interest in what is happening around them</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Irritable and won't settle</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restlessness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unable to walk or refusing to walk</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not using an arm, leg, hand or foot for no obvious reason</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling more unwell than before</li> </ul>	<p><b>Taillifting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No urine (pee) or wet nappies for 12 hours or more</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fewer nappies and not as heavy as usual</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Blood in the faeces (poop)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 watery diarrhoea (runny poop) episodes in 24 hours</li> </ul>
<p><b>Eating and drinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unable to keep any fluids down because of vomiting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vomit that is green or black or has blood in it</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No interest in drinking or feeding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Very thirsty</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dry mouth, lips or</li> </ul>	



## THOMAS

*This is my son Thomas not long before sepsis struck in July 2017. Big, beautiful, strong and healthy, Thomas was in Brisbane representing the Northern Territory in Rugby.*

*Thomas was taken to a GP very poorly, vomiting, with diarrhea and the flu. He was sent away with gastro tablets. Five hours later he had mass organ failure. He then spent 20 painful, traumatic days in ICU on two ECMO machines. The onset of Pneumonia then sepsis was rapid with Thomas.*

*If anyone around Thomas at that time had been aware of sepsis, we may have got him to hospital quicker and his chances of survival could have been 5% more for every hour.*

*There is a huge gaping hole in my heart and that of my family since the loss of Thomas.*

*Thomas's Mum, Amanda Clarke*

*Thomas's story: [TforThomas](#)*



Having a child in hospital with a diagnosis of sepsis is a very challenging time for you, your child and other members of your family and community. The eight-part 'Journeying through Sepsis' video series aims to support families by providing information on each stage of a child's hospital journey – from initial diagnosis through to intensive care, rehabilitation and support after discharge. The series features four families who have lived their own journey through sepsis as well as clinicians with experience in working with families affected by sepsis. We hope that this video series will provide you with clear and relevant information that you can explore further with your child's health care team. Watch these videos however you choose as they have been designed to be watched in part or in full, individually or in order as a series.

- [Part 1 – What is Sepsis?](#)
- [Part 2 – Early Stage of admission: the facts](#)
- [Part 3 – Support during the early stages of admission](#)
- [Part 4 – Rehabilitation: the facts](#)
- [Part 5 – Support during rehabilitation](#)
- [Part 6 – Preparing for discharge: the facts](#)
- [Part 7 – Support for preparing for discharge](#)
- [Part 8 – Sepsis: some final thoughts](#)

*We thank the Queensland families who have openly and honestly shared their experiences to help others:  
Sabella, Marissa and Peter;  
Tiffany and Austin; Cindy and Myles;  
Amy, Peter and Mia.*



# Support for families that have been affected by sepsis

If your networks include families affected by sepsis



A child's diagnosis of sepsis is a life changing event that often involves a significant period of hospitalisation with many medical teams. The lifelong impacts of sepsis can require ongoing care for many years. Parents have described a sense of isolation in their child having had, and potentially being significantly affected by an unfamiliar condition. We want families to be well supported and have access to useful information and resources.

The Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program provides support for Queensland families throughout their journey with sepsis - from a new diagnosis, to receiving care in hospital, rehabilitation, returning home after hospital, and bereavement support to families whose child has died from sepsis. Families can self-refer to our support services through the following links:

- [Family Support Network](#): A state-wide network of families who have been affected by sepsis.
- [Peer Mentor Program](#): Peer support and information between mentors and mentees with a shared lived experience.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

Resources for culturally and linguistically diverse families



To support culturally and linguistically diverse families in our communities, we have translated resources for awareness of sepsis in babies and children into 10 different languages.

Available for download in Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Swahili, and Vietnamese:

- [Sepsis in Babies and Children animation video](#)
- [Sepsis in Babies and Children postcard](#)
- [Paediatric sepsis checklist](#)





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially children, experience higher rates of sepsis than the non-indigenous Australian population. Sepsis awareness resources have been developed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

- [Spotlight on Sepsis – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#)
- [Postcard – Did you know the signs of Sepsis in bubs and kids?](#)

The artwork, titled **‘Healing Journey’**, represents the journey through sepsis. The centre circle represents a central location for patients to be treated and cared for. The journey lines moving forward and backward represent the struggles and setbacks families and patients might face as well as the successes, positives, and joy in good health. The unique orange circles represent people as a symbol of the diversity of doctors, carers, and patients. The purple circles on the outside represent traditional medicines and meeting places where elders teach the younger generations how to care for one another. The smaller purple, orange and black dots are a representation of sepsis itself. Some cases are mild (small orange dots), some are serious (larger purple dots), and some are deadly (black dots).

*By Sheri Skele at Bigi Nagala – Proud Bidjara woman from South-West Queensland*

Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service

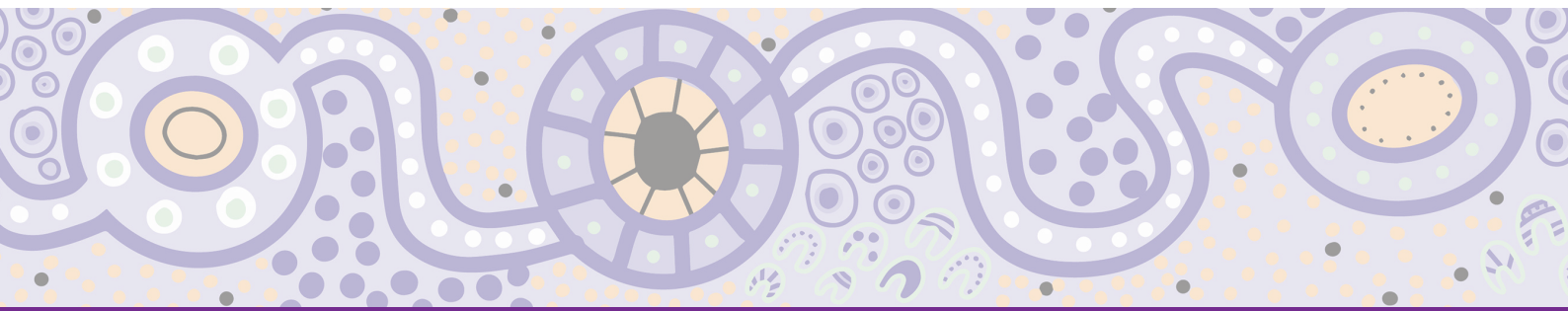
## Do you know the signs of SEPSIS in bubs and kids?

Floppy	Cold skin	Seizure	Drowsy or confused
A lot of pain or very restless	Working hard to breathe	Rash that doesn’t fade when pressed	Blotchy, blue or pale skin

**Go to hospital or call 000 now**  
[www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/Sepsis](http://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/Sepsis)

Children’s Health Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

Artwork: *The Healing Journey* by Sheri Skele, Bidjara



# Conclusion

## Key points to remember

- Sepsis is a **medical emergency**
- **Know the signs of sepsis** and seek medical attention urgently
- You know your child best, if you are concerned, don't be afraid to ask your healthcare provider **"Could it be sepsis?"**

The infographic is a purple-bordered box containing eight circular illustrations of children with various symptoms of sepsis. The top row shows four children: one with tears and lightning bolts on their chest, one with a red exclamation mark and open mouth, one with greyish skin, and one with closed eyes. The bottom row shows four children: one being held by a woman, one with a thermometer in their mouth and snowflakes around them, one lying on the ground with wavy lines around them, and one with a red rash on their chest. The word 'SEPSIS' is written in large, purple, textured letters in the center.

A lot of pain or very restless

Fast breathing or long pauses in breathing

Very blotchy, blue or pale skin

Drowsy, difficult to wake up, confused

## Know the signs of SEPSIS

Floppy

Feels abnormally cold to touch

Fit or convulsion

Rash that doesn't fade when pressed



## Collaboration

The Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program collaborates with a number of organisations to help the fight against sepsis. If you would like further information please visit the websites below:

- [Sepsis Australia](#)
- [Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#)
- [Movement for Mia](#)
- [Maddy Jones Foundation for Sepsis Prevention](#)
- [Sepsis Alliance](#)
- [TforThomas](#)

### LAUREN

*Lauren, a year 12 student in the midst of her final exams started feeling a little off one day – but put it down to the stressors of studying, on top of a recent flu like infection. Thinking an early night was in order, Lauren went to bed and awoke the next morning with a raised temperature, confusion, drowsiness and just ‘feeling weird’. A trip to the Emergency Department, Lauren received fluids and was sent home feeling better. However, a possible infection was detected in her blood test and the hospital soon asked her to return.*

*From here, Lauren deteriorated with laboured breathing, low blood pressure and high heart rate. She was transferred to a higher acuity hospital and placed in intensive care where she stayed for 5 days receiving antibiotics through a central IV line inserted directly into her heart. Superb medical attention and a further 5 days on the ward saw her released home with a month-long dose of IV antibiotics and instructions to rest. No follow-up was required.*

*Determined to finish year 12, Lauren went back to school part-time, but there was something very different going on. She was highly emotional, tired all the time, anxious, struggling with poor mental function and very unsettled. She focused on her studies, pushing herself to the brink of REAL exhaustion many times. Frequent trips to the GP informed her that they weren’t sure what was wrong, many tests, examinations and inconclusive ideas were all posed. But nothing seemed to solve the issues. Concerns about her recovery from sepsis were dismissed.*

*Lauren’s family came across Post Sepsis Syndrome (PSS), a condition that causes mental and physical impairments. Despite looking physically in one piece, thankfully, no amputations, organ and brain damage, there was a real thing happening. Lauren had not been herself for a very long time, she just needed to have the support to find out why and help her.*

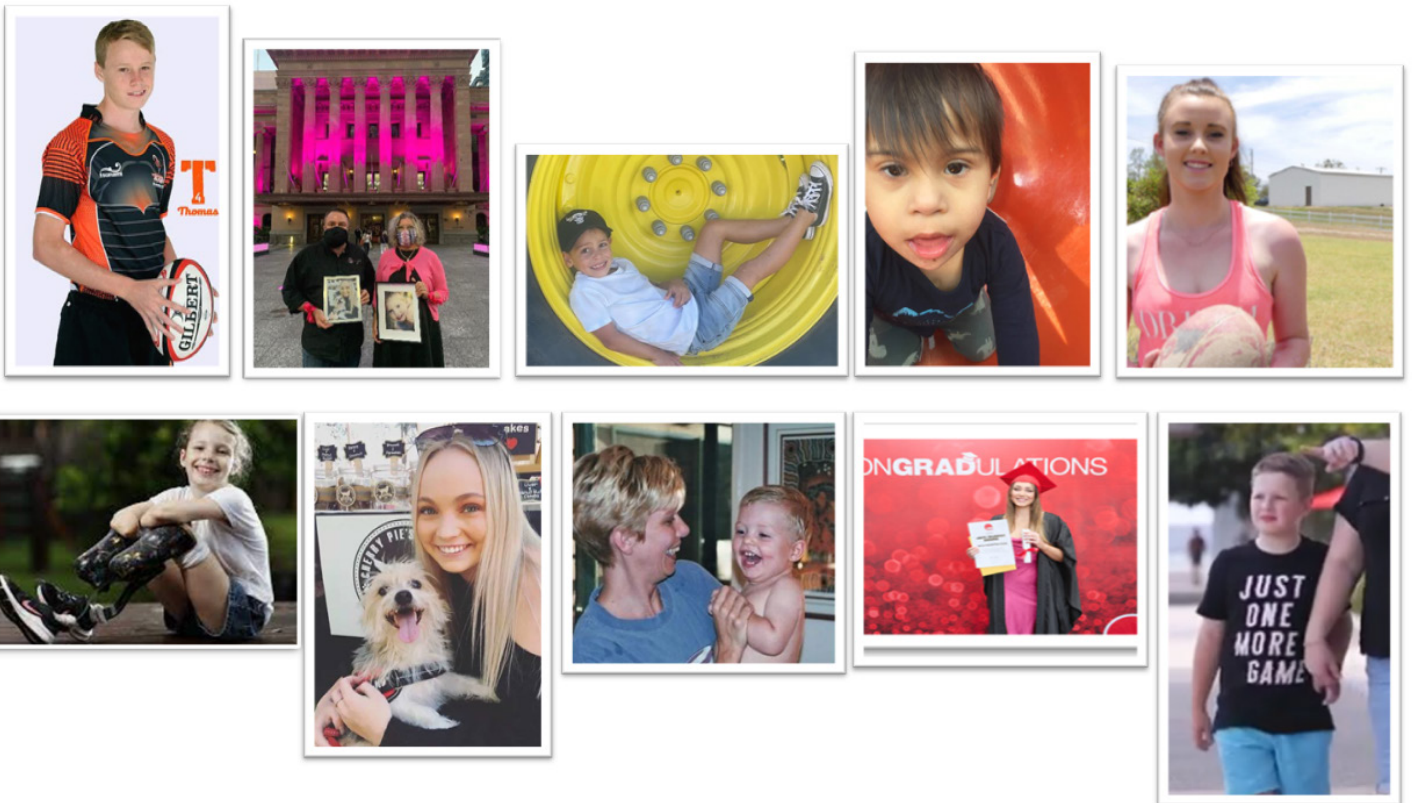
*Getting in touch with various Sepsis support networks and survivors has allowed Lauren and her family to understand the likely challenges better. This meant getting the correct psychological support, learning to manage her energy and psychological safety better and dealing with the socially isolating aspects of living through a significant health event at a young age. Lauren wants to use her experience to educate others and ensure that their care appreciates the immediate and longer-term impact that sepsis has on the patient, their family, and their community.*



## Thank you

The Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program would like to express our appreciation to you for joining the fight against paediatric sepsis. Together we can raise awareness and provide education to reduce the burden of paediatric sepsis on Queensland children and families.

If you would like to know more about the **Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program** please contact us at [paediatricsepsis@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:paediatricsepsis@health.qld.gov.au) or visit [Sepsis | Children's Health Queensland](#).



## *The inspiring families of the Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program*

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