

## Consent- What does this mean?

Before any health professional examines or treats you they must have your consent or permission. Consent may be implied (e.g. offering a wrist for taking a pulse) or written (where you sign a form agreeing the treatment/operation). Young people are presumed to be able to give consent depending on their maturity and the nature of the decision.

Where a child is not competent to give consent, only a person (or body) with parental responsibility may consent on the child's behalf. More detailed information is available [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

## Information we hold about you and your rights under the Data Protection Act

Please refer to the booklet 'Your Healthcare Information – Your Rights! Our Responsibilities!' for further guidance.

## How to comment on your treatment

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer your questions. However, if you have any concerns you can also contact the Patient Experience Service on 0800 917 6039 or E-mail [portsmouthhospitals.patientexperience@porthosp.nhs.uk](mailto:portsmouthhospitals.patientexperience@porthosp.nhs.uk)

Other sources of information:

NHS Direct online:

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

Helpline: 0845 4647

# Septic arthritis

## Information for parents



The Paediatric Unit  
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham  
Tel: (023) 9228 3344  
or (023) 9228 6391

## Specialist Support

If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Health Information Centre Tel: (023) 9228 6757, who will advise you.

This leaflet has been provided to answer some of the questions you may have about **septic arthritis**.

### **What is Septic Arthritis?**

Septic arthritis is an infection in a joint and is usually caused by one of the following bacteria: -

- Staphylococcus
- Streptococcus
- Pneumococcus

The term 'arthritis' is used to describe inflammation of a joint.

### **What are the symptoms?**

- Sudden pain and swelling of the joint
- High temperature
- The joint often feels warm to the touch and the skin around the area can look red
- Movement of the joint increases pain
- Reluctance to move the joint

### **Are any tests needed?**

Your child will need to have some blood tests.

They may also need an x-ray and an ultrasound scan to see the extent of the infection. If the joint is swollen your child may need to have some fluid removed with a needle. This may be carried out whilst your child is asleep under a general anaesthetic.

This fluid will be sent to the laboratory and will also help with the diagnosis.

### **What is the treatment of septic arthritis?**

Delay in treatment can quickly destroy parts of the joint which may lead to long term pain and reduced movement of the joint.

Strict bed rest is essential. Antibiotics will be given through a small tube called a 'cannula', which is put in a vein in your child's hand, arm or foot. An operation may be required to wash out the joint.

In order to rest the joint, plaster is sometimes applied. However, if the infection is in the hip or knee, simple skin traction will be applied to relieve spasm and pain.

Bed rest and antibiotics will continue until the infection has gone (could take up to 2 weeks). On discharge from hospital antibiotics will be given for a total of up to six weeks. This is shown by your child's temperature going down. Further blood tests will confirm this.

### **Going home**

You must contact your GP immediately if your child has a high temperature or increased pain in the affected area.

### **Is a follow-up necessary?**

Yes. An appointment will be arranged for your child on discharge from hospital.

After the infection has gone, your child will be encouraged to move about freely to exercise the joint and muscles that have been rested. This helps to prevent long term stiffness and reduced mobility in the affected joint.

### **Glossary:**

*Skin Traction:* Sticky bandages are applied around to your child's leg up to their thigh, which is then attached to a weight that hangs over the bed. There are usually no complications.

If you have any questions or concerns, please Shipwreck Ward, A8 at Queen Alexandra Hospital. Tel: (023) 9228 3344 or your GP.