

# Discharge Instructions for Infective Endocarditis (Child)



Your child has infective endocarditis (IE). This is an infection of the lining of the heart or the heart valves. The infection was caused by bacteria that entered the bloodstream. The bacteria traveled to the heart. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream a number of ways. Sometimes the bacteria can attach to heart valves that don't form correctly. Or to heart valves that are damaged or have been repaired. The most common infections occur from dental procedures or cuts, or because of an infection in another part of the body. Your child's infection was treated in the hospital. They were given strong antibiotics through an IV (intravenous) line. Below are instructions for caring for your child at home. This is a very serious infection. It needs a great deal of attention and care.

## Home care

- Your child may need IV therapy for weeks after they leave the hospital. You need to arrange for this therapy. Ask for help with this before you leave the hospital.
- Make sure your child takes any prescribed antibiotics until they are all gone. Do this even if your child feels better. These antibiotics don't just treat an infection. They also prevent further damage to the heart. It may be harder to treat infections in the future if your child doesn't finish all the antibiotics. Some children may also need to take antibiotics before surgery or dental care to prevent infections.
- Tell your child's healthcare provider about all infections your child has. Do this even for minor infections.
- Limit your child's activity as directed by the healthcare provider.
- Be sure your child has good dental care. Take your child to the dentist every 6 months or more often. Dental infection can lead to endocarditis. See the dentist right away for toothaches and abscesses. Teach your child to take good care of their teeth and mouth. Make sure your child brushes their teeth after every meal and flosses as directed.
- Ask your child's healthcare provider whether your child needs to take antibiotics before any medical procedure or dental visit.
- Take good care of your child. Ask your healthcare provider to explain the elements of a healthy lifestyle to your child. This includes exercise and a healthy diet.

## When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call your child's healthcare provider right away if any of the following occur:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your child's healthcare provider
- Bloody urine
- Unexplained fatigue
- Symptoms come back or get worse
- Your baby is fussy or cries and can't be soothed

## Call 911

Call 911 if your child has any of the following:

- Chest pain

- Problems breathing or shortness of breath
- Unexplained sweating
- Severe pain in the belly, lower back, or side
- Trouble speaking
- Weakness in the arms or legs
- A fast or irregular heartbeat
- Severe headache

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