Keeping infection treatment on track

If treatment for an infection will continue after transfer, ask who owns the next dose and who will review the next test result. Write those answers beside the medicine name.

Infectious diseases are illnesses caused by the spread of microorganisms in the body.

They can be transmitted by direct contact with a person who is sick, by indirect contact — touching a doorknob a sick person has touched, for example — by an insect or animal bite, or through contaminated food, water, soil or plants. How these infections spread depends on the type of organism.

Infectious diseases are extremely common, with some, like influenza, striking more often than others. The immune system effectively protects the body from many infectious germs, but sometimes when they grow to a number too large for the immune system to fight, the infection becomes harmful to the body. The effect the infection has on the body depends on the organism and varies widely. Even a small amount of infectious bacteria can seriously affect a person whose immune system is compromised. For example, pneumonia symptoms can be severe and sometimes even life-threatening, especially for children and elderly adults, but bacteria sinus infection symptoms are often treated quickly and effectively with antibiotics. Signs of infection can also vary, but fever, diarrhea, fatigue, muscle aches and coughing are common symptoms of many infectious diseases.

The immune system itself, while indispensable and often remarkable, can sometimes react badly to an invasion and make the problem worse. Sepsis is caused by the body's dangerous and potentially life-threatening response to an infection. Sepsis symptoms include fever and chills, low body temperature, rapid pulse, decreased urination, rapid breathing, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Most people recover from mild sepsis, but severe sepsis symptoms, like changes in mental ability, low blood pressure, difficulty breathing and loss of consciousness often require treatment in an intensive care unit. Untreated, sepsis can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and even death.

Although anyone can get an infectious disease, people with medically compromised immune systems are at a higher risk, including those with cancer, HIV/AIDS, and other conditions that affect the body's ability to defend itself against infections. Elderly people and those who are malnourished are also at an increased risk of acquiring an infectious disease.

In serious cases, some people with an infectious disease may need long-term care to fully recover. This includes, but is not limited to, people with severe sepsis symptoms, complications of pneumonia and long-lasting kidney infection symptoms.

Infectious Disease Complications

Complications from infectious diseases are common. Most, like skin rashes or fatigue, are relatively mild and resolve as the infection subsides, but some infections can have potentially life-threatening complications like encephalitis, septicemia and bacteremia — a potential complication of pneumonia. These complications are serious medical conditions that can lead to organ damage and respiratory or renal failure. Recovery often includes treatment from a variety of caregivers over an extended period of time.

Several bacterial, viral and parasitic infections have been linked to an increased risk of cancer, because they either cause chronic inflammation, disrupt the biochemical signaling which controls the rate of cell growth, or weaken the body's innate ability to fight cancer.

These infections include:

- Human papillomavirus
- Helicobacter pylori
- Hepatitis B and C
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Epstein-Barr virus
- Human t-cell leukemia/lymphoma virus type 1

People with infectious diseases may also suffer from complications related to IV therapy, which is used to deliver antibiotic, antiviral, antifungal and antiparasitic medications to treat these infections. Complications of IV therapy can include drug reactions, phlebitis, infiltration, extravasation and line-related infections on clots on the tip of the IV catheter.

Infectious Disease Treatment And Recovery

Infections can occur alongside surgical wounds, weakened immunity or other complex conditions. The treatment team may need to coordinate antimicrobial medicines, wound care, nutrition and rehabilitation.

Conditions that may require assessment for continuing infection treatment include:

- Infected pressure ulcers
- Bacterial infections
- Post-surgical wounds
- Cellulitis
- Viral infections
- Sepsis
- Fungal infections
- Osteomyelitis
- Severe case of COVID-191

Most infectious diseases can be effectively treated and cured, but it can take time to fully recover and alleviate complications. If you or a loved one are suffering from an infectious disease, it's important to have a specialized care team create an individualized treatment plan that enables you to achieve your recovery goals.

An infection can affect more than its original site, especially during recovery from surgery or critical illness. Ask which tests are pending, whether the results could change treatment and whom to call if symptoms worsen.

Ask the treating team how it protects IV lines and wounds, reviews culture results and monitors for a new or worsening infection.

For a Lakeview review, describe the infection, cultures and other pending tests, antimicrobial orders, line care and any active medical or functional needs.

Archived recovery account

This account describes care in an earlier setting. The course, timing and outcome belong to that individual.

The patient broke her arm at the same time that she came down with a serious flu strain that led to pneumonia. When she arrived at the hospital, it was discovered that she also had a severe staph infection and kidney failure, as well as an internal bleed in her digestive system.

With pneumonia complications and a very high fever, the patient's white blood cell count was alarmingly high. Her delicate condition was further complicated when she began to develop severe sepsis symptoms.

Over several months, the patient was admitted to and released from several acute care hospitals and skilled nursing facilities, but she was not able to make progress toward recovery. Everything changed for the patient at the treating hospital, where she received advanced respiratory therapy and rehabilitation. When she arrived, the patient was very weak and struggled to make immediate progress, but with an attentive team of caregivers working together to help her regain her health, the patient began to make steady improvements. Her progress motivated her to work harder, and she made great strides in her respiratory, physical and occupational therapy.

Just before the patient left the treating hospital, she shared some thoughts on her ordeal and the care she received at the treating hospital. She described a long course from an arm fracture through pneumonia and sepsis. She credited her daughter with helping her persevere.

References:

- For questions about a possible stay, call Lakeview Admissions at (262) 534-8509. During a stay, ask the bedside nurse who can help with your question.
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https://www.lakeviewsystem.com/long-term-acute-care