

# Asplenia (without a spleen) or hyposplenia (functioning spleen) and preventing infection

## Risk of Infection

Without a spleen (or functioning spleen), your child is at greater risk of developing severe infection. When visiting the doctor remind them that your child does not have a spleen.

You should **seek prompt hospital review** if your child experiences:

- an illness with a **temperature above 38°C**
- rigors (shaking)
- if there is significant parental concern.

Daily preventative antibiotics should be given to your child until they are at least five years of age and for at least two years following splenectomy (spleen removal). Lifelong preventative antibiotics may be warranted, given the risk of severe infection is lifelong. You can discuss this further with your treating doctor. Regularly check antibiotics are not expired and remember that antibiotics are not a replacement for medical (doctor) review.

Talk to your doctor if you live, or are planning to travel to, a remote area or overseas. Education and standby antibiotics are required if immediate access to medical care is not available. Travel advice for anti-malarial medication, mosquito avoidance and additional travel vaccines may be required before heading overseas.

There is an increased risk of severe infection following dog, cat or other animal bites or severe scratches. Early medical review and preventative antibiotics are recommended.

Your child is strongly encouraged to wear a medic alert bracelet – available at: [www.medicalert.com.au](http://www.medicalert.com.au)

## Immunisations

It is recommended your child receives immunisations against:

- Pneumococcal disease
- Meningococcal (groups A,C,W-135,Y) disease
- Meningococcal (group B) disease
- *Haemophilus influenzae type b*
- Influenza infection.

Your child should have an individual **Asplenia/hyposplenia management plan**. Your doctor can refer your child to the Perth Children's Hospital Specialist Immunisation Clinic for assistance with this. Further patient resources are available on the Spleen Australia website <https://spleen.org.au/> (full registration with Spleen Australia is not yet available in WA).

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.**

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