Our family experience

Having a child with meningitis or septicaemia can have a huge impact on family life. The recovery process can take time for everyone. It is often the parents who understandably take longer to adjust after such a traumatic experience, even if their child makes a full recovery.

It is important that all the family receives care and support that meets their needs, including grandparents and extended family. Brothers and sisters, particularly young children, will need extra attention and understanding because they can experience anxiety and feelings of isolation. Parents can feel guilty about dividing their time and attention between their children.

Many families find it useful to write down their account of what happened to their child when they were ill. It can be therapeutic and in the future can help your child to understand what has happened to them, particularly if they were sedated, or too young to remember. Some hospitals encourage families to take photographs; this is a very personal choice, but many families and children have found it useful to look back at the pictures some time later. If children are living with after-effects, the photographs can help explain to them and others what they have been through.

Information about the support available to you and your family can be found online.

Helplines: Meningitis Now 0808 80 10 388 / Meningitis Research Foundation 080 8800 3344

You can download more of these pages online: www.meningitisnow.org/myjournal or www.meningitis.org/After-Effects-Children

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