

Sepsis and Other Febrile Illness, Observation Care, Medical 346

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Effective Date 1/1/2026

Next Review Date 9/2026

Coverage Policy Medical 346

Version 2

Member-specific benefits take precedence over medical policy and benefits may vary across plans. Refer to the individual's benefit plan for details [*](#).

Description of Item or Service:

Sepsis is a life-threatening medical emergency that occurs when the body's immune system launches an extreme response to an infection. Let untreated, sepsis can lead to the body damaging its own organs, leading to shock, organ failure and death.

Other common names: Septicemia

Clinical Criteria:

- Admission is indicated for **1 or more** of the following:
 - [Hemodynamic instability](#)
 - [Bacteremia](#) (if blood cultures performed)
 - [Hypoxemia](#)
 - [Altered mental status that is severe or persistent](#)
 - New coagulopathy (eg, reduced platelet count or new prolonged prothrombin time)
 - [Tachypnea](#) that persists despite observation care
 - [Dehydration that is severe or persistent](#)
 - Inability to maintain oral hydration (eg, needs IV fluid support) that persists after observation care
 - Evidence of end organ dysfunction (eg, rising creatinine, myocardial ischemia, rising liver function tests) that is severe or persists despite observation care as evidenced by **1 or more** of the following
 - Serum glucose measurement > 200 mg/dl in the absence of a diagnosis of diabetes mellitus or specific notation of exacerbation of diabetic hyperglycemia related to infection
 - Hyperlactatemia as evidenced by acute elevation of serum lactate > 3.0 mmol/L (27.0mg/dl)
 - Core (rectal) temperature lower than 95 degrees F (35 degrees C) (eg, thought to be due to infection)
 - Parenteral antimicrobial regimen that must be implemented on inpatient basis (eg, infusion or monitoring needs beyond capabilities of outpatient parenteral therapy)
 - Isolation indicated that cannot be performed outside hospital setting

Admission for sepsis is considered Not Medically Necessary for any indication other than those listed in the clinical indications section.

Document History:

Revised Dates:

Reviewed Dates:

- 2025: September – Implementation date of January 1, 2026. No criteria changes. Updated to new format only.

Origination Date: September 2024

Coding:

Medically necessary with criteria:

Coding	Description
	None

Considered Not Medically Necessary:

Coding	Description
	None

The preceding codes for treatments and procedures applicable to this policy are included above for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of a procedure, diagnosis or device code(s) does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement policy. Please refer to the member's contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage of these services as it applies to an individual member.

Policy Approach and Special Notes: *

- Coverage:
 - See the appropriate benefit document for specific coverage determination. Individual specific benefits take precedence over medical policy.
- Application to products:
 - Policy is applicable to Sentara Health Plan Commercial products.
- Authorization requirements:
 - Pre-certification by the Plan is required.
 - For observation level of care, see also Medical 346 OBS, Sepsis and Other Febrile Illness, Observation Care.
- Special Notes:
 - Medical policies can be highly technical and complex and are provided here for informational purposes. These medical policies are intended for use by health care professionals. The medical policies do not constitute medical advice or medical care. Treating health care professionals are solely responsible for diagnosis, treatment, and medical advice. Sentara Health Plan members should discuss the information in the medical policies with their treating health care professionals. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and these medical policies are subject to change without notice, although Sentara Health Plan will notify providers as required in advance of changes that could have a negative impact on benefits.
 - Services mean both medical and behavioral health (mental health) services and supplies unless We specifically tell You otherwise. We do not cover any services that are not listed in the Covered Services section unless required to be covered under state or federal laws and regulations. We do not cover any services that are not Medically Necessary. We sometimes give examples of specific services that are not covered but that does not mean that other similar services are covered. Some services are covered only if We authorize them. When We say You or Your We mean You and any of Your family members covered under the Plan. Call Member Services if You have questions.

References:

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SHP Sepsis, SHP Medical 346, sepsis, septicemia

