

Table 3 Risk stratification tool for children aged under 5 years with suspected sepsis

Category	Age	High risk criteria	Moderate to high risk criteria	Low risk criteria
Behaviour	Any	No response to social cues Appears ill to a healthcare professional Does not wake, or if roused does not stay awake Weak high-pitched or continuous cry	Not responding normally to social cues No smile Wakes only with prolonged stimulation Decreased activity Parent or carer concern that child is behaving differently from usual	Responds normally to social cues Content or smiles Stays awake or awakens quickly Strong normal cry or not crying
Respiratory	Any	Grunting Apnoea Oxygen saturation of less than 90% in air or increased oxygen requirement over baseline	Oxygen saturation of less than 92% in air or increased oxygen requirement over baseline Nasal flaring	No high risk or moderate to high risk criteria met
	Under 1 year	Raised respiratory rate: 60 breaths per minute or more	Raised respiratory rate: 50–59 breaths per minute	
	1–2 years	Raised respiratory rate: 50 breaths per minute or more	Raised respiratory rate: 40–49 breaths per minute	
	3–4 years	Raised respiratory rate: 40 breaths per minute or more	Raised respiratory rate: 35–39 breaths per minute	
Circulation and hydration	Any	Bradycardia: heart rate less than 60 beats per minute	Capillary refill time of 3 seconds or more Reduced urine output For catheterised patients, passed less than 1 ml/kg of urine per hour	No high risk or moderate to high risk criteria met
	Under 1 year	Rapid heart rate: 160 beats per minute or more	Rapid heart rate: 150–159 beats per minute	
	1–2 years	Rapid heart rate: 150 beats per minute or more	Rapid heart rate: 140–149 beats per minute	

	3–4 years	Rapid heart rate: 140 beats per minute or more	Rapid heart rate: 130–139 beats per minute	
Skin	Any	Mottled or ashen appearance Cyanosis of skin, lips or tongue Non-blanching rash of skin	Pallor of skin, lips or tongue	Normal colour
Temperature	Any	Less than 36°C		
	Under 3 months	38°C or more		
	3–6 months		39°C or more	
Other	Any		Leg pain Cold hands or feet	No high risk or high to moderate risk criteria met

This table is adapted from NICE's guideline on [fever in under 5s](#).