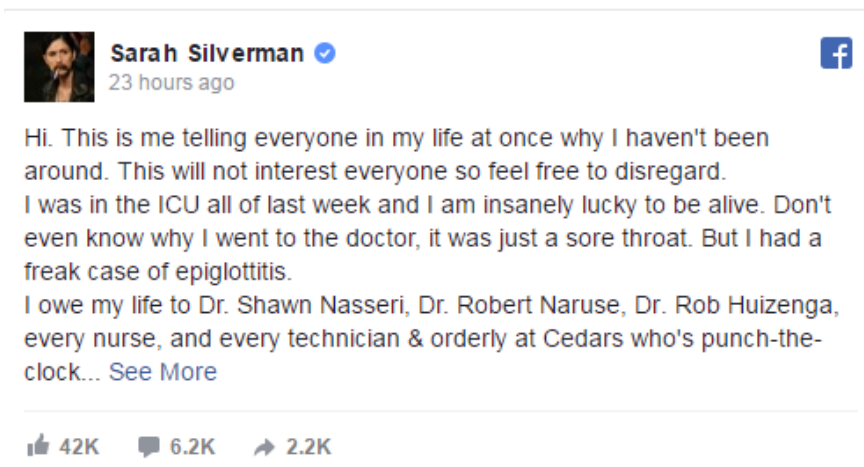


## Sarah Silverman shares how she almost died due to a rare throat disease

Gabrielle Frank 7, July 2016

Comedian Sarah Silverman is known for her sarcastic wit and controversial sense of humor, but her most recent Facebook post is no laughing matter.

The star revealed Wednesday that she is "insanely lucky to be alive" after what she thought was just a sore throat wound up being a severe case of epiglottitis, a condition where the epiglottis — a small cartilage structure in your throat that covers the windpipe and protects the trachea — swells. In rare cases, this can result in a blockage of the flow of air into your lungs — and can be life threatening.



"Don't even know why I went to the doctor, it was just a sore throat. But I had a freak case of epiglottitis," Silverman, 45, wrote.

"This is a very rare condition that was more commonly seen in children," said Dr. Rebecca Parker, president elect of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "The H flu type b was a major cause of epiglottitis in children, since their airways are smaller than adults, and the

infection would cause their epiglottis to swell, but we don't see it as much anymore because of vaccinations."

According to Parker, the symptoms of epiglottitis differ greatly from the symptoms of strep throat. Though you may experience a sore throat, it will also affect your vocal chords, and you'll sound like there is a potato at the back of your throat. Epiglottitis will also make it very difficult for you to swallow, which results in drooling. Other dangerous symptoms include shortness of breath and a sick appearance.

Several things can lead to a swollen epiglottis like direct injury to the throat and other infections. It can also result from smoke exposure, if someone had been in a house fire. It is a condition that can happen at any age.



Sarah Silverman didn't say what caused the rare, severe injury to her throat.

Silverman said she was in the intensive care unit for five days, and wrote that she owes her life to the doctors, nurses, technicians and orderlies who saved her. She also expressed gratitude to her boyfriend, Michael Sheen, and friends, for sitting by her side.

"I'm so moved by my real-life hero, Michael, and amazing Sissies (blood & otherwise) & amigos, who all coordinated so that there wasn't a moment I was alone," Silverman wrote.



Not one to let her emotions get the best of her, Silverman ended her frightening post on a comical note: "...When I first woke up and the breathing tube came out, I still couldn't talk and they gave me a board of letters to communicate. My loved ones stood there, so curious what was going to be the first thing I had to say. They followed my finger, rapt, as I pointed from letter to letter until I finally spelled out, 'Did you see Hello My Name is Doris.'"

While Silverman's condition was a very rare case, Parker warned, "It can be a very subtle condition; don't be a hero. It's always best to err on the side of caution, as it can be a tricky diagnosis."

<http://www.today.com/health/sarah-silverman-shares-how-she-almost-died-due-rare-throat-t100598>