

Looking out for the signs of sepsis

Information for Patients

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What is sepsis?

Sepsis is a serious condition that happens when your body overreacts to an infection. Instead of just fighting the infection, your immune system causes widespread inflammation, which can damage your organs. If not treated quickly, sepsis can be life-threatening.

What are the signs of sepsis and when should I get help?

Sepsis can be hard to spot. There are lots of possible symptoms. In the early stages of sepsis, symptoms can be very similar to those of 'flu'.

If you become increasingly unwell or have any of the following symptoms, we advise you to call 999 and say "this could be sepsis":

- Confusion. Not knowing where you are, getting things muddled or not recognising familiar people.
- Extreme shivering or severe muscle pain.
- Not had a pee (pass urine) in 18 hours or a whole day.
- Severe breathlessness.
- Feeling 'I know something is badly wrong with me'.
- Skin covered in spots or patches (mottled). On black or brown skin this may be easier to see on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet. Skin is bluish or very pale.
- Dizziness that leads to a faint or collapse.
- Racing heart beat.

Remember, if it does turn out to be sepsis, getting treated even 1 hour earlier might make the difference between life and death.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Why have I been given this leaflet?

We give this leaflet to patients:

- who are more at risk of getting an infection that could lead to sepsis,
- who are currently being treated for an infection,

Sepsis is sometimes called septicaemia or blood poisoning. Every year in the UK 245,000 people are affected by sepsis. There are around 48,000 sepsis related deaths per year. If sepsis is spotted early, most people recover fully.

Who is at risk of getting sepsis?

You cannot catch sepsis from another person. Some people are more likely to get an infection that could lead to sepsis. This could be if you:

- had an operation or invasive procedure in the last 6 weeks.
- are very young, very old or frail.
- are pregnant, have given birth or had a termination of pregnancy or miscarriage in the last 6 weeks.
- have a weak immune system because of illness such as diabetes, sickle cell disease, splenectomy, and leukaemia.
- have a weak immune system because of taking drugs such as long-term steroids, anti-rejection drugs after an organ transplant, and immunosuppressant drugs used in conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.
- misuse drugs and inject them into your body.

If you have been treated for an infection, you may be well enough to go home to recover. You will most likely keep getting better without any problems. There is a small chance the infection could get worse and turn into sepsis.

Anyone that is at risk of getting an infection, or has been treated for an infection must look out for the signs of sepsis as detailed on page 1.

How is sepsis treated?

If you are diagnosed with sepsis you will be admitted to hospital for treatment. Treatment includes injectable antibiotics, fluids and oxygen.

We may need to admit some patients into a critical care unit (also known as intensive care). This is so we can monitor them closely and support their major organs like the heart, kidneys and lungs whilst the sepsis is being treated.

People with severe sepsis can become very sick. Their vital organs may stop working properly. It can even cause death. However, if sepsis is found and treated quickly, most people recover fully with no lasting problems.



More information

For more information visit:

- **NHS Sepsis:** www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis
- **The UK Sepsis Trust:** www.sepsistrust.org

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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