

Looking out for the signs of sepsis when you have an infection

Information for Patients

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This leaflet aims to give advice to people who have an infection. You have been assessed as being well enough today to continue your recovery at home. It is most likely you will continue to get better without any further problems. However there is a small risk that the infection may become more severe and that you develop a response called 'sepsis'.

Advice to help you get better from an infection

- Get plenty of rest and sleep.
- Drink plenty of fluids, such as water, juice, tea (unless advised otherwise).
- Follow any instructions given by your healthcare team related to your infection.
- If you have been given antibiotics, collect them within the same day and ideally take the first dose within 4 hours of leaving hospital. Continue taking them until the course is completed. Do not stop the course early even if you feel better. Contact your GP or NHS 111 if you have any side effects from the antibiotics.

Preventing the spread of infection

It's not always possible to prevent sepsis, but there are things you can do to help prevent infections that can lead to sepsis:

- You and your family should wash hands thoroughly before eating and after using the toilet.
- Consider vaccinations for you and your family because they do protect against infection.
- Clean and care for any wounds.

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

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

What is sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening illness caused by the body's response to an infection. The immune system releases chemicals into the bloodstream to fight infections. Sepsis develops when the immune system overreacts and the chemicals start to damage your body's own tissues and organs. Severe cases of sepsis can lead to septic shock, which is a medical emergency.

Each year in the UK, there are at least 200,000 cases of sepsis in adults and around 48,000 people will die as a result of the condition. If it is caught early, the risk of death and long-term complications is low.

You cannot catch sepsis from another person. Sepsis is sometimes called septicaemia or blood poisoning.

Who is at risk of getting sepsis?

Some people are more likely to get an infection that could lead to sepsis. For example, if you:

- 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 due to illness such as diabetes, sickle cell disease, splenectomy and leukaemia.
- have a weak immune system due to taking drugs such as long-term steroids, anti-rejection drugs after an organ transplant, and immunosuppressant drugs used in conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.
- have had an operation or invasive procedure in the last 6 weeks.
- misuse drugs intravenously.

What are the signs of sepsis and when should I seek 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 over the next few days 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 that is mottled, 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.

How is sepsis treated?

If sepsis is diagnosed you will be admitted to hospital for treatment such as injectable antibiotics, fluids and oxygen.

For some people, admission to a critical care unit (also known as intensive care) may be needed for closer monitoring and support for your major organs like your heart, kidneys and lungs whilst the sepsis is being treated.

People with severe sepsis are likely to develop problems with vital organs and be very ill, and the condition can cause death. However, if identified and treated quickly, most people recover fully with no lasting problems.

Further information

For more information visit:

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis
- www.sepsistrust.org

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على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
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