

# SEPSIS

## WHAT IS SEPSIS?

Sepsis- sometimes confused with septicemia or blood poisoning- is the immune system's overreaction to an infection or injury.

The immune system starts attacking its own organs and tissues. With early diagnosis it can be treated, often relatively easily with antibiotics, however if not treated immediately can result in organ failure, amputation and death.

Sepsis is life-threatening and can kill in under 24 hours if not treated immediately.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

In the early stages it can be hard to distinguish sepsis from the flu or a chest infection, however other symptoms can develop. It presents differently in adults and children.

### ADULT SYMPTOMS

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine (24 hours)
- Severe breathlessness
- I feel like I might die
- Skin that mottles, very pale or slightly blue

### CHILD SYMPTOMS

- Breathing very fast
- Has a 'fit' or convulsion
- Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
- Rash that does not fade when you press it
- Very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch

### CHILD UNDER 5

- Is not feeding
- Is vomiting repeatedly
- Has not passed urine for 12 hours

**If you suspect sepsis, it's vital to seek urgent medical attention.**

## WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON CAUSES?

Sepsis can be caused by any infection or injury, however most common causes are:

- Chest infection causing pneumonia
- Urinary tract infection
- Infected cut or bite
- Wound from trauma or surgery
- Leg ulcer or cellulitis
- Medical problem in the abdomen, such as a burst ulcer or a hole in the bowel

You can't catch sepsis from another person. Antibiotics can cause harm if given inappropriately and doctors should always prescribe with caution.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Early recognition and treatment of sepsis saves lives.

If you are showing any of these signs and symptoms which are not usual for you, you should seek help.

Call 999 if you are very concerned. If you are concerned, but don't think you need to go straight to hospital call your doctor immediately.

If there is any delay in talking to your doctor call the 111 service for further advice.

## HOW IS SEPSIS TREATED?

Almost all people with sepsis and septic shock require admission to hospital.

Some people may require admission to an intensive care unit (ICU).

Due to problems with vital organs, people with sepsis are likely to be very ill.

However, sepsis is treatable if it is identified and treated quickly, and in most cases leads to a full recovery with no lasting problems.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The UK Sepsis Trust

Telephone: 0808 800 0029

Website: <https://sepsistrust.org/>

NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis/>

Queens Park Medical Centre

Farrer St, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2AW- <https://www.qpmc.co.uk/>