

Sepsis Patient Care Leaflet

How do I avoid sepsis in the future?

The key is early recognition of the symptoms of sepsis in a patient that has an infection.

Staying healthy by eating well and exercising can help to keep away possible infection.

What can I expect when I am discharged?

Sometimes patients make a full recovery and do not need any future support after discharge from hospital. Depending on your specific needs, you may be referred to a hospital/ community rehabilitation team for assessment and review; this should be done by your discharging doctor, if appropriate.

Sources of information and support
Sepsis is recognised as a significant cause of mortality and morbidity in the NHS, with around 48,000 deaths in UK attributed to sepsis annually. This is more than stroke, heart attack, lung disease and lung cancer.

There are a number of organisations that provide support and advice for people and their families, who have had a diagnosis of sepsis, including:

The Sepsis Trust

0800 389 6255

www.sepsistrust.org/

Acknowledgements

- **Surviving Sepsis Campaign**

www.survivingsepsis.org/

- **The Nursing Times**

www.nursingtimes.net/clinical-subjects/infection-control/early-identification-and-treatment-of-sepsis/5067163.fullarticle

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona w innych językach/formatach.

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Introduction

This leaflet has been produced to provide more understanding to patients and carers affected by sepsis.

What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is a common and potentially life threatening condition that arises when the body's response to infection causes injury to its own tissues and organs. The organs, such as the kidneys, lungs, heart or brain may "suffer" as a consequence.

Sepsis is serious, but diagnosing it quickly and giving antimicrobials early can help prevent it becoming more severe.

What causes sepsis?

Sepsis is caused by infection in the body and some of the common sources are:

- Chest infection
- Urinary infection
- Brain infection
- Abdominal infection
- Skin, soft tissue infection
- Bone or joint infection

Any of these infections can lead the body to have an adverse reaction and organs may start to "suffer".

What are the symptoms?

If you have, or suspect you may have an infection, and you have one or more of the following symptoms, you may be experiencing signs of sepsis. Some of the symptoms of sepsis include:

- High temperature and/or extreme shivering
- Breathing fast and severe breathlessness
- New confusion
- Irritability or restlessness in children
- Cold or blue fingers or toes
- Skin mottled or discoloured

If you or your relative have any of these symptoms and are concerned, visit your GP or attend the Emergency Department.

In an emergency call 999.

How is sepsis diagnosed?

Sepsis is diagnosed when a doctor or nurse thinks you have an infection, then by looking at observations like blood pressure, temperature, heart rate, breathing rate and oxygen levels and assessing organ function. Sometimes you will need to have blood tests and x-rays to confirm infection and how serious it is.

What treatment is given in hospital for sepsis?

If sepsis is identified by your GP, you may need to come to hospital. If you are at home and think you may have sepsis and feel unwell you should attend hospital or call 999 in an emergency. Treatment in hospital is commenced rapidly. It includes administration of antimicrobials and fluids through a drip, blood tests, and other tests like x-rays. Sepsis can be very serious if not treated quickly and patients may require close monitoring and some may need to go to the Intensive Care Unit. There is a team of specialist nurses in the Trust called the Sepsis Nurse Specialists (SeNS). The sepsis team work alongside the doctors in the Emergency Department; you may be seen by a sepsis nurse or a doctor who will commence treatment to patients who have sepsis. Once this has happened, your care will be followed up by a specialist medical team.

Who is most at risk of developing sepsis?

People who are at increased risk of developing sepsis are people who are on chemotherapy or immunosuppressant medication. The very young and the elderly are also at risk, and anyone with catheters or IV cannulas, or recent invasive surgical procedures.

Are there any long term effects of Sepsis?

Usually a full recovery is expected from sepsis given timely treatment. Sometimes some organs may not function as well as they did before. This should be discussed by the discharging doctor in each individual's case.