



WHAT IS SEPSIS?

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

Simply put, the immune system starts attacking its own organs and tissues. We don’t, as yet, understand why this happens but if not treated immediately, sepsis can result in organ failure, amputation and death. However, with early diagnosis it can be treated, often relatively easily with antibiotics.

Many people think sepsis is a rare condition. It isn’t. The figures are truly shocking: it affects 248,000 people every year in the UK and it kills 48,000, which is more than breast, bowel and prostate cancer combined. The UK Sepsis Trust (UKST) believe that thousands of lives could be saved through raising public awareness of the symptoms, educating healthcare professionals to help them spot it quicker and empowering people to Just Ask: “Could it be Sepsis?”

For more information, or to make a donation please visit sepsistrust.org

SEPSIS AND COVID-19

We now know that patients who’ve had COVID-19 are 20% more likely to have sepsis in first year of being discharged from hospital. So it’s more important than ever to know the signs of sepsis.

If you, or anyone you know, has any of these symptoms it’s vital to seek medical help immediately.

IF YOU’RE FEVERISH OR SHIVERING
AND FEELING REALLY UNWELL



JUST ASK

“COULD IT BE SEPSIS?”

THE LINES
BETWEEN
COVID-19
AND SEPSIS
CAN BE
BLURRED.



**40% of all sepsis survivors
suffer permanent,
life-changing after effects.**

**5 people die from sepsis
every hour in the UK.**

The controlled copy of this document is maintained by The UK Sepsis Trust. Any copies of this document held outside of that area, in any format are considered to have passed out of control and should be checked for currency and validity. DNI0016; Support; Rev. 19th August 2020 Ver 2.

The UK Sepsis Trust registered charity number (England & Wales) 1158843 (Scotland) SC050277. Company registration number 8644039. Sepsis Enterprises Ltd. Company number 9583335.

**IT’S A SIMPLE QUESTION,
BUT IT COULD SAVE LIVES.**

The charity urgently needs funding to raise awareness of the symptoms and train healthcare professionals on how to spot sepsis more quickly.

For more information on the condition, or to make a donation please visit sepsistrust.org.

Just Ask: “Could it be Sepsis?”

sepsistrust.org



What are the symptoms?

In the early stages, it's often difficult to distinguish sepsis from flu, gastroenteritis or a chest infection. There's no one sign, and symptoms present differently in adults and children.

However, if you've an injury no matter how small, or have (or recently had) an infection and develop any of the following symptoms, you must immediately go to A&E or call 999: Just Ask: "Could it be Sepsis?"

Adult Symptoms

- **S**lurred speech or confusion
- **E**xtrême shivering or muscle pain
- **P**assing no urine in 24 hours
- **S**evere breathlessness
- **I** feel like I might die
- **S**kin that's mottled, very pale, or slightly blue

Child Symptoms

A child may have sepsis if he or she:

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

A child under 5 may have sepsis if he or she:

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

If you suspect sepsis, it's vital that you or the person you think might have sepsis receive urgent medical attention. Sepsis is life-threatening, and can kill in under 24 hours if not treated immediately.

For more information on sepsis and the symptoms, please visit: sepsistrust.org/about

Sepsis is a medical emergency

Sepsis is a medical emergency, and should be considered to be as serious as a heart attack or a stroke. It can be treated with intravenous antibiotics and fluids, and the outlook is good for the vast majority of patients who receive attention quickly – international recommendations suggest that treatment should be started within one hour of sepsis being suspected.

Tragically, patients with the most severe forms of sepsis are up to five times more likely to die than those who have suffered a heart attack or stroke, which is why it's so important to seek help immediately.

What are the most common causes?

Sepsis can be triggered by any infection or injury, however the most common causes are a:

- 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

Sepsis can also be caused by a huge variety of different germs, like streptococcus, e-coli, MRSA or C. diff. Most cases are triggered by common bacteria, which normally don't make us ill.

Antibiotics can cause harm if given inappropriately and doctors should always prescribe with caution. In the case of sepsis however, they are the single most important life-saving measure.



The UK Sepsis Trust's work

The UK Sepsis Trust (UKST) was founded in 2012 by NHS consultant, Dr Ron Daniels BEM. The charity's mission is to end preventable deaths from sepsis and improve outcomes for sepsis survivors. UKST's foundations are based on four pillars: educate healthcare professionals; raise public awareness; provide support for those affected by this devastating condition and to instigate political change.

Support for those touched by Sepsis and/or COVID-19

Our support team is run by specialist NHS sepsis and ICU nurses with many years' experience. They're passionate and dedicated to help those struggling with grief, having problems with recovery or trying to support a loved one. The team operate a free and confidential support line and email service which is open 24/7, as well as free support groups.

As the recovery profile of patients is similar to those suffering from post-sepsis syndrome UKST has recently extended our support services to people who have been hospitalised with COVID-19. We've many years experience in supporting recovery from a critical illness, and understand the journey can take months – sometimes years, with many patients experiencing physical, cognitive and psychological problems through their rehabilitation journey.

For more information and support visit: sepsistrust.org/get-support. Alternatively, you can contact the support line directly by email on support@sepsistrust.org, or by phone - 0808 800 0029.