

## Sepsis

Issued by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

### What is sepsis? What are the signs of sepsis? What should you do if you spot sepsis?

#### What is sepsis?

Sepsis is a life threatening condition that arises when the body's response to an infection injures its own tissues and organs. Sepsis leads to shock, multiple organ failure and death especially if not recognized early and treated promptly.

Sepsis is responsible for almost a third of our hospital deaths and kills more patients than the 3 main cancers put together

Some patients with sepsis will need admitting to critical care

With the right care at the right time, patients will have the best chance of surviving sepsis

#### How will I know?

In the early stages it's often difficult to distinguish sepsis from flu. Infections which can give rise to sepsis are common, and include lung infections (pneumonia), water infections, infections in wounds, bites or the joints, and problems like burst ulcers.

If you have, or have recently had a fever and develop any of the following symptoms, don't delay: call 999 and say this is sepsis.

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine (in 18 hours or a day)
- Severe breathlessness
- It feels like you are going to die
- Skin that is mottled, bluish or very pale


#### What can be done?

The good news is, life-saving treatment for sepsis is often relatively straightforward. Early recognition and intervention can save your life. Getting basic treatments including antibiotics and fluids within the first hour can halt the progression of sepsis and hugely improve outcomes.

#### More Information

You can read more about the causes, symptoms and treatment of sepsis on the NHS Conditions website below:

The UK Sepsis Trust also has information on how to spot the signs of sepsis as well as detailed information on the 'Sepsis Six'.

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

 <https://sepsistrust.org/>

## What happens after sepsis?

The majority of people that are diagnosed with sepsis that is mild or uncomplicated will make a full recovery. However, some patients who have had severe sepsis may suffer from long-term problems.

These can have life changing effects on you and your family. These effects can be physical or psychological.

### What can I expect when I go home?

Going home after a serious illness can be very scary and frustrating for you and your family. Try not to push yourself too hard as this may delay your recovery. Listen to your body. You may feel more emotional than normal or low in mood. This is to be expected after a life changing experience.

### What should I look out for in the future?

If you have two or more of the following symptoms: fever, fast heartbeat, rapid or shallow breathing, dizziness or confusion, it could be sepsis. Look out for other signs such as changes in your skin - is it mottled, pale or cold? Are you struggling to pass urine, or only passing small amounts?

## Further Support

### Have you been affected by sepsis?

Many people are surprised by their recovery following sepsis. You or someone close to you may have had sepsis. You can get support from the North East Sepsis Support Group.

Contact Details: 0808 800 0029 or [support@sepsistrust.org](mailto:support@sepsistrust.org)

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 0344 811 8118.

## Other sources of information

**NHS 111**

**NHS Choices** [www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

**NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)** [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 01670 511098 Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 0344 811 8111 [www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

PIN: 895/V1

Review date: July 2022

© This material is the copyright of the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.