

Sepsis

Act quickly. Save a life.

What is sepsis?

Sepsis is life threatening organ failure caused by infection.

Sepsis is **a medical emergency**, just like heart attack and stroke.

Don't delay seeking medical attention: If treatment starts early the outlook is good for the vast majority of people.

Public, patients and their relatives need to work together to **'Act quickly. Save a life'**. This will ensure that life saving treatment is given as soon as possible.

Everybody with an infection is potentially at risk of developing sepsis. However, sepsis is most likely to develop in people who:

- are either young or very old
- have a weakened immune system, often because of treatment such as chemotherapy for cancer, or steroids for inflammatory conditions
- have a long term urinary catheter or long term intravenous line in place for treatment. Wounds or bites may also cause infection or sepsis
- are already in hospital due to another serious illness. Despite the best efforts of medical staff, secondary infection acquired in hospital is always possible

Sepsis can sometimes occur during pregnancy or post-delivery, so it is important to look after your health and report symptoms of infection to your doctor or midwife.

Seek medical advice if you are at all concerned.

Don't be afraid to say: **"I think this might be sepsis"**. Remember, if it does turn out to be sepsis, getting the patient treated **even one hour earlier** might make the difference between life and death.



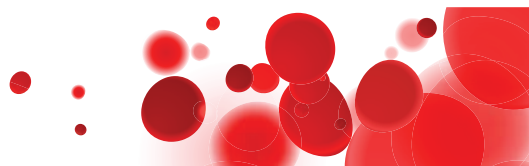
How will I recognise sepsis?

If a person with infection has the following, then they may have sepsis.

Adults	Children over five years old
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slurred speech or confusion• Extrême shivering or muscle pain• Passing no urine (in a day)• Severe breathlessness• It feels like you're going to die• Skin mottled or discoloured	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a fever or has had a fever in the last 24 hours• Feels abnormally cold to touch• Breathing very fast• Has a 'fit' or convulsion• Skin looks mottled, bluish, or pale• Has a rash that does not fade when you press it• Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
	<h3 data-bbox="565 885 1022 940">Children under five years old</h3> <p data-bbox="565 943 1022 1023">A child under five years old may have sepsis if he or she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is not feeding• Is vomiting repeatedly• Has not passed urine for 12 hours

Adapted with permission from the UK Sepsis Trust, 2019.

If a person has **any** of the above symptoms they need to be taken to hospital for urgent medical treatment. Further tests will help diagnose sepsis.



What can be done?

The good news is, life-saving treatment for sepsis is often relatively straightforward. Acting quickly can halt the progression of sepsis and improve the outcome for patients.

Treatment may include antibiotics, intravenous fluids and oxygen as directed by the doctor or nurse.

Across Northern Ireland medical and nursing staff will implement a treatment plan called the '**sepsis six**' (a series of six steps that should be carried out within one hour of diagnosis). This can be started by nurses and doctors, and has been shown to double the chance of survival.

Act quickly. Save a life.



More information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this leaflet please speak to your doctor or nurse or contact your GP.

For further information visit the UK Sepsis Trust website:

www.sepsistrust.org



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:

