

SEPSIS AND BLOOD POISONING

Blood poisoning is a common term that is sometimes incorrectly used to describe sepsis. Sometimes a doctor or nurse may say “blood poisoning” because they realize this is a term many people are familiar with. But blood poisoning is not an accurate description of the condition and the two terms should not be used interchangeably.

Sepsis is not an infection in and of itself. Sepsis is the body’s often deadly response to infection. Sepsis kills and disables millions and requires early suspicion and rapid treatment for survival.

Sepsis and septic shock can result from an infection anywhere in the body, such as pneumonia, influenza, or urinary tract infections. Worldwide, one-third of people who develop sepsis die. Many who do survive are left with life-changing effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain and fatigue, organ dysfunction (organs don’t work properly) and/or amputations.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH SEPSIS?

Scientists are working on discovering what exactly happens with sepsis. It is known that the inflammatory response causes problems such as blood clotting too much and too fast. This means that parts of the body don’t get adequate blood flow and the body’s tissues don’t get the nutrients they need. The signs and symptoms of sepsis vary widely and can cause organs to fail, requiring life support.



While we still don't know why our bodies react this way, we know that sepsis can cause:

- Leakage from the blood vessel linings (much like a water hose with holes in it)
- Low blood pressure (hypotension) with reduced blood flow to vital organs
- Small clots throughout the body that prevent nutrients from reaching vital organs

In many cases, these changes cause a person's organs to stop working. Some of the signs that organs are affected include:



Heart

Low blood pressure, fast pulse



Lungs

Low oxygen level, problems breathing



Kidneys

Making very little urine



Brain

Confusion, coma

WHAT IS SEPSIS?

SEPSIS is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

What are the signs and symptoms of sepsis?

Sepsis is a toxic response to an infection. There is no single sign or symptom of sepsis. It is, rather, a combination of symptoms.

What should I do if I think a loved one or I have sepsis?

If you suspect sepsis, call 9-1-1 or go to a hospital and tell your medical professional, "I AM CONCERNED ABOUT SEPSIS."

Symptoms can include ANY of the following:



Temperature: Higher or lower than normal



Infection: May have signs and symptoms of an infection



Mental Decline: Confused, sleepy, difficult to rouse



Extremely Ill: Severe pain, discomfort, shortness of breath

SEPSIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY. IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS, CALL 9-1-1 OR GO TO A HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY.

To learn more about sepsis, or to read tributes and survivor stories, visit us online at Sepsis.org



SEPSIS
ALLIANCE