

# SEPSIS AND DIABETES

Diabetes is a chronic disease that has a significant impact on your life. Having diabetes means you must work to control your blood glucose (sugar) levels to be sure that they don't get too high or too low.

The amount of glucose in your blood is important. Your body needs glucose for energy, but too much of it can destroy body tissues and too little can starve your body of nutrients.

People who have diabetes are also at risk of developing wounds and sores that don't heal well. While the wounds are present, they are at high risk of developing infection. And, again because of the diabetes, the infections can get severe quickly. When infection overwhelms the body, the body can respond by developing sepsis and going into septic shock.

Sometimes incorrectly called blood poisoning, sepsis is the body's often deadly response to infection. Sepsis kills and disables millions and requires early suspicion and rapid treatment for survival.

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 (don't work properly), and/or amputations.

## WHAT IS DIABETES?

If you have diabetes, your pancreas doesn't secrete any insulin or your body is unable to use insulin that is secreted.

## TREATMENTS

Diabetes can't be cured, it can only be managed. If you have type 1 diabetes, the only way to manage your blood glucose levels is by monitoring them and injecting yourself regularly with insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is generally treated first with lifestyle changes and/or oral medications to help your body use the glucose in your system. If your blood glucose levels are still too high, you may need to use insulin. Depending on the severity of the type 2 diabetes, it is possible for some people to improve their overall health enough to be able to stop taking medications. If they lose weight, get their blood pressure and cholesterol under control, this could be possible – however, they would have to work hard at maintaining this because it is not a cure, it is management.

## WHY DOES DIABETES PUT ME AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING AN INFECTION AND SEPSIS?

If you have diabetes, your body has a harder time healing when you have a cut or other type of wound. This is a particular concern with wounds on your feet, because the blood circulation may be impaired. The longer it takes for a wound to heal, the higher the risk of developing an infection. Also, many people with diabetes lose some sensation in their feet. When this happens, they may not notice if they have a sore at first.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INFECTION & SEPSIS?

An infection occurs when germs enter a person's body and multiply, causing illness, organ and tissue damage, or disease. For people with diabetes, an infection can turn serious, or even deadly, very fast.

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. For a person with diabetes, any infection that is anywhere in your body can lead to sepsis.

## HOW CAN I PREVENT AN INFECTION?

In addition to receiving treatment from your doctor, the following suggestions can help reduce your risk for getting an infection:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Check your skin regularly for any signs of wounds that you may not have noticed, especially on your feet.
- If you have any breaks in your skin, including blisters, watch them carefully for signs of infection.
- Talk to your doctor about getting a flu shot and other vaccinations.

## 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. Symptoms can include ANY of the following:

- T** **Temperature:** Higher or lower than normal
- I** **Infection:** May have signs and symptoms of an infection
- M** **Mental Decline:** Confused, sleepy, difficult to rouse
- E** **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](http://Sepsis.org)**

