

SEPSIS 101 Q&A

SEPSIS TAKES A TERRIBLE TOLL ON LIVES AND HEALTHCARE DOLLARS.

SEPSIS IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE INPATIENT COST IN AMERICAN HOSPITALS, ACCOUNTING FOR \$27 BILLION IN HEALTHCARE SPENDING IN 2014. IT IS THE MOST COSTLY CONDITION BILLED TO MEDICARE. AS PEOPLE AGE, THEIR IMMUNE SYSTEMS CAN'T FIGHT OFF INFECTIONS AS EASILY, MAKING THEM AT GREATER RISK FOR DEVELOPING SEPSIS.

MORE THAN 250,000 AMERICANS DIE EACH YEAR AS THE RESULT OF SEPSIS. THAT'S ONE SEPSIS DEATH EVERY TWO MINUTES – MORE THAN FROM PROSTATE CANCER, BREAST CANCER, AND AIDS COMBINED.

Q - WHAT IS SEPSIS?

A - Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is life-threatening, and without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly cause tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

Q - WHAT CAUSES SEPSIS?

A - Sepsis happens when an infection you already have – in your skin, lungs, urinary tract or somewhere else – triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. The inflammation can trigger a cascade of changes and events that quickly spirals towards a lethal trajectory. Fifty percent of the time, sepsis leads to death. The germs that cause sepsis can be contagious, but sepsis itself is not contagious.

Q - WHAT IS POST-SEPSIS SYNDROME?

A - Up to half of the more than 1.3 million sepsis survivors each year often face long-term, sometimes debilitating effects, also known as post-sepsis syndrome. Ongoing complications can include amputations, anxiety, memory loss, chronic pain and fatigue, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and more.

Q - WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INFECTION AND SEPSIS?

A - An INFECTION occurs when germs enter a person's body and multiply, causing illness, organ and tissue damage, or disease. If that infection isn't stopped, it can cause a life-threatening condition called SEPSIS.

Q - HOW IS SEPSIS DIAGNOSED AND TREATED?

A - Many of the symptoms of sepsis, such as fever and difficulty breathing, are the same as in other conditions, making sepsis hard to diagnose in its early stages.

Diagnosis

Symptoms of sepsis can include a combination of any of the following:

- Confusion or disorientation
- Shortness of breath
- High heart rate
- Fever, or shivering, or feeling very cold
- Extreme pain or discomfort
- Clammy or sweaty skin

Get medical help immediately if you suspect sepsis, or if your infection is not getting better or is getting worse.



Treatment

People with sepsis are treated in the hospital. Research shows that rapid, effective sepsis treatment, which includes giving antibiotics, IV fluids to regulate blood pressure and maintain blood flow to organs, and treating the source of infection, can save lives. Other types of treatment, such as assisting breathing with a machine or kidney dialysis, may be necessary. Sometimes surgery is required to remove tissue damaged by the infection.

Q - WHO IS AT RISK?

A - Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection can lead to sepsis. So anyone can get sepsis; at any time. However, certain people are at higher risk:

- Adults 65 or older
- People with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease
- People with weakened immune systems
- Children younger than one

Q - WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO PREVENT SEPSIS?

A - Treat open wounds, stay up to date on immunizations, finish prescribed courses of antibiotics, and practice good hygiene – especially good hand-washing. Act fast and get medical care immediately when an infection is not getting better or if it gets worse.

Q - IT'S JUST A BUG BITE OR A HARMLESS LOOKING CUT ON MY FINGER. NO WORRIES, RIGHT?

A - Anytime your body has a break in the skin, like from a cut or even a piercing, there's a chance it could cause an infection. Preventing and treating infections as soon as they develop are key to helping prevent sepsis.

Getting medical attention right away if you suspect sepsis is as important as treating heart attacks and strokes quickly. Sepsis is a medical emergency.

Time matters. If you or your loved one suspects sepsis or has an infection that's not getting better or is getting worse, ask your doctor or nurse, "Could this infection be leading to sepsis?"

Source: www.sepsis.org and www.hitnots.com