

What is The Whittington Hospital doing about Sepsis?

- ★ We have a designated **Sepsis Team**, made up of various doctors and nurses with a **Sepsis Nurse** readily available,
- ★ We pride ourselves with an **Educational Programme** for doctors and nurses to learn about Sepsis to maintain high standards of clinical care and treatment.
- ★ Staff take part in **simulations** with mock patients to practice treating Sepsis in different clinical situations.
- ★ We have a specific **checklist** printed for all patients admitted with Sepsis to ensure the “Sepsis Six” is completed.
- ★ We have easy **grab bags** so that equipment is easily available for staff.

Where can I find out more about Sepsis?

- UK Sepsis Trust at: <https://sepsistrust.org>
- NHS at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis
- UCL Partners at: www.uclpartners.com/what-we-do/patient-safety/sepsis



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or

whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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What is Sepsis?

An information leaflet
for patients and
relatives

“COULD IT BE SEPSIS?”

IT'S A SIMPLE QUESTION, BUT IT COULD SAVE A LIFE.



What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is when your body attacks its own organs and tissues as a severe response to an infection. You may have previously heard sepsis called septicaemia or blood poisoning. Sepsis is a life threatening condition, which can lead to organ failure and death if not treated quickly.

Who gets Sepsis?

Sepsis can affect any person of any age and is a serious condition. Some people are more likely to get sepsis than others because they have difficulty fighting off infections. For example extremes in age, people with certain medical conditions and people on medications which reduce how effective your immune system is, such as those with an organ transplant and people on chemotherapy for cancer. Importantly, however sepsis can affect previously fit and healthy individuals.

What causes Sepsis?

When you catch an infection, usually the body is able to clear the germs without any help. Sometimes the body needs help to clear the infection with antibiotics. Rarely, the infection can get into the bloodstream, which causes the body to make germ killing cells and chemicals. These can cause damage to your organs and tissues, making you very unwell. The infection can start anywhere and then reach your blood. Common places for it to start are in your chest and urinary tract.

What are the symptoms of Sepsis?

Symptoms tend to develop quickly and can be vague. "It feels like you're going to die" is a common statement said by victims of sepsis.

- ❏ Early symptoms include: a high or low body temperature, chills, fast heartbeat or fast breathing.
- ❏ Later symptoms may include: feeling dizzy or faint, confusion, severe breathlessness, not passing urine in 24 hours, mottled or discoloured skin, nausea and vomiting.

How is Sepsis treated?

When you are admitted to hospital with Sepsis, doctors and nurses start a management bundle within one hour, also known as the Sepsis Six. This bundle has been shown to improve outcomes in patients with sepsis.



What does this mean?

Blood cultures: Blood is taken and sent to the lab to see if any germs grow. Antibiotics can then be changed if needed to target any germs that grow.

IV: intravenous / through a "drip"

Fluid challenge: Fluid given quickly intravenously

Lactate: a marker for low oxygen in your body, checked with a blood test

Will I be admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ITU)?

Most patients with sepsis are admitted to medical wards. If you are very sick and require closer monitoring or your organs are failing, you may be admitted to ITU. Here, we can closely monitor you, such as checking your pulse, blood pressure, breathing and oxygen level. In ITU we can also provide support for major organs, such as your kidneys, heart or lungs if they are failing. We may support organs using medications or machines, such as ventilators.

When will I be discharged?

Follow up will be arranged if needed. Ask your medical team for information about your own discharge

What happens when I am discharged?

This is when the medical team decide that you are fit enough to return back to your home address. They may speak with other healthcare professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists to check whether you need additional help or equipment at home. The team may decide that you need further rehabilitation prior to being discharged back home.

You may not feel 100% in yourself straight away. Sepsis is a serious condition which can take time to fully recover.