

Infection and Sepsis

This leaflet offers information on infection and sepsis. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

You have been diagnosed with an infection and are being discharged with treatment that is right for your condition. If your condition gets worse in any way you must get medical help as soon as possible, as sometimes people with an infection can develop sepsis.

What is sepsis and who can get it?

Sepsis is a rare but life-threatening reaction to an infection.

This reaction may cause damage to your organs. If the sepsis is not treated early this can lead to organ failure.

The worst form of sepsis is called septic shock, where the blood pressure is very low and needs treatment in the intensive care unit with strong medication.

Sepsis can happen if you have pneumonia, a bladder, kidney or skin infection, an abscess (especially in the stomach) or an infected device that has been put into your body.

Anyone can get sepsis but some people are at higher risk.

At higher risk are people with long term conditions such as lung disease or diabetes or who are:

- very young
- elderly
- on treatment to suppress their immune system
- on steroids
- on chemotherapy for cancer.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Sepsis may make you confused or be less alert. It can also feel like influenza (flu) or gastroenteritis.

Other possible symptoms are written below in a way to help you try to remember them:

S - slurred speech

E - extreme shivering or muscle pain

P - passing no urine in a day

S - severe breathlessness

I - 'I feel I might die'

S - skin mottled or discoloured.

If you develop any of these symptoms, seek medical help straight away. You don't have to have all of them before you should get help.

What treatments are available?

Catching and treating sepsis early is very important for your survival and recovery.

Sepsis is treated with antibiotics into your vein and other strong medication given for any other effects.

Useful sources of information

Further information can be obtained from the UK Sepsis Trust:

www.sepsistrust.org

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about infection and sepsis, please contact your GP or go to your nearest emergency department (ED or A&E).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

