

Sepsis Information Leaflet

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition triggered by infection that affects the function of the organs. It is treated most effectively if recognised early.

Signs & symptoms of infection:

Infections are often suspected when a person develops a temperature and feels unwell.

A high temperature is $> 38^{\circ}\text{C}$. A low temperature, $\leq 35.5^{\circ}\text{C}$, is also of concern but do check your technique.

Watch out for loved ones who have taken paracetamol as while it may lower the temperature it does not treat any underlying infection. Look for the other signs and symptoms of infection listed in the table.



Rigors	These are involuntary movements of the body that look a bit like seizures but are not associated with loss of consciousness. Rigors occur when the body temperature rapidly changes.
'Flu-like' illness	Many infections present with non-specific signs and symptoms including a high temperature, aches and pains, severe fatigue, and loss of appetite.
Respiratory Tract infection	Cough/green sputum and/or breathlessness
Intra-abdominal infection	Unexplained abdominal pain/distension associated with some 'flu-like' symptoms
Womb infection	Lower abdominal pain/discomfort that is constant, with or without unpleasant discharge and some 'flu-like' symptoms
Septicaemia or blood poisoning	Feeling very unwell often with vomiting and/or diarrhea and/or some 'flu-like' symptoms. Agitation and/or confusion are often present particularly in the older person. Young adults often complain of severe leg pain and are unable to stand or walk properly.
Cellulitis/skin or wound infection	Painful, red, and swollen skin. The affected area is hot to touch compared with unaffected areas. There may or may not be pus. Recent onset exquisitely painful skin that does not look infected but is associated with feeling unwell often with vomiting and diarrhea and 'flu-like' symptoms needs to be urgently investigated.
Meningitis	Severe headache, neck stiffness, intolerance of bright lights. This may or may not be associated with a rash. Acute confusion or agitation may also occur.
Urinary tract infection	New onset frequent passing of small amounts of urine associated with burning discomfort. Flank pain may also occur.

