MATERNAL SEPSIS

Infection & Sepsis Prevention

Early Identification and Treatment Saves Lives in SEPSIS

Risk Factors

Non Pregnancy Related
- Age more than 35
- Minority ethnic group
- Vulnerable socio-economic background
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Recent surgery
- Immunocompromised e.g. Systemic Lupus, on medications that affect the immune system
- Chronic renal failure
- Chronic liver failure
- Chronic heart failure

Pregnancy Related
- Cerclage (stitch in cervix to prevent miscarriage)
- Preterm/prolonged rupture of membranes (waters breaking)
- Retained products (cells remaining in the womb after the baby is born or after a miscarriage)
- History of pelvic infection
- Group A Strep. infection in close contact
- Recent amniocentesis (taking a sample of water from around the baby)

The signs of sepsis: if your loved one has an infection and is getting worse, do the sepsis checklist (below). If any one of the organ systems is newly abnormal seek urgent medical review and ask:

COULD IT BE SEPSIS?

Brain
- Are they acting themselves? Are they excessively sleepy, difficult to wake, agitated or confused or too sick to communicate?

Breathing
- Is their breathing fast or laboured? Can they finish a sentence without a pause?

Circulation
- Is their heart rate very fast or faster than usual? Are their hands and feet abnormally cold, clammy and pale?

Kidney
- Have they passed urine in the last 12 hours? If they have passed urine is it a normal colour or very dark and only a dribble?

Clotting
- Do they have a new rash? If you press on it with a glass and the red part does not disappear when pressed tell your doctor or midwife/nurse.

Function status
- Do they have a change in behaviour? In young adults sepsis may present with severe leg pain or inability to stand up. It may be difficult to assess change in some women with intellectual or physical disability if you do not know them well.
- Are they performing all their usual tasks? Is there anything different from usual?

Exposure
- Has anyone in your family been very sick recently with similar symptoms? Has your loved one had a recent major operation or infection or travelled abroad recently?
- Have they ever had Group B Strep. or any drug resistant bugs?

Infection & Sepsis Prevention

- Good Hygiene
  - Keep yourself and your environment clean. Using soap and water keeps the number of bugs down

- Good Sanitation
  - Use clean drinking water and clean toilet facilities.

- Vaccination Immunisation
  - Vaccination stimulates the immune system to recognise and destroy specific potentially life-threatening bugs.

- Breastfeeding
  - Breast milk contains proteins from the mother’s immune system that your baby can use to help fight infection.

For more information visit: www.hse.ie/sepsis

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition triggered by infection

Clinical Strategy and Programme Division

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