

MATERNAL SEPSIS



Sepsis is a life-threatening condition triggered by infection

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.

Functional 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.

Early Identification and Treatment Saves Lives in SEPSIS



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive
Clinical Strategy and Programme Division

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