

Sepsis:

Be aware of this deadly condition

Sepsis is among the top causes of disease-related death in our country, killing about 200,000 people each year. Actress Patty Duke's recent death from sepsis brought more attention to this dangerous disease. It's important to know the signs of sepsis so you can seek emergency medical care for this serious condition. Early treatment can save lives.







Sepsis is a strong and harmful reaction of the body's immune system. It can be triggered by common infections, such as pneumonia, a urinary tract infection, or even a minor infection like a cut or scrape, if it becomes infected and the infection spreads.

Most of the time, these infections don't cause sepsis. But when sepsis does occur, it can cause a dangerous drop in blood pressure, resulting in organ failure and death. It tends to affect the very young, the elderly or those with weakened immune systems.

Influenza vaccines and pneumococcal vaccines may help prevent sepsis. Consider getting these vaccines to reduce your risk.

SIGNS OF SEPSIS

Sepsis isn't always recognized right away, because its symptoms may mimic other health problems like the flu. The CDC says the following signs can help you identify sepsis.

					
S	E	P	S	I	S
Shivering, fever or very cold	Extreme pain or general discomfort ("worst ever")	Pale or discolored skin	Sleepy, difficult to rouse, confused	"I feel like I might die"	Short of breath

If you have any signs of an infection along with any symptoms of sepsis, seek medical care immediately.