



Sepsis and Wounds

Cuts and scrapes can happen, but a simple wound, if not treated properly, can quickly become a serious health risk. Even small scrapes or cuts can allow germs—including viruses and bacteria—to enter the blood stream, causing an infection which can lead to sepsis.

Symptoms.

- **Cuts that have pus or liquid.** Infected wounds tend to build up pus or fluid which is cloudy, green or foul smelling.
- **Red skin around the injury.** Red skin is sign of irritation. If the discoloration continues, there is a high probability that it is an infected wound.
- **Swelling that gets worse after a few days.** Swelling is associated with wounds; if swelling persists it could be a sign of infection.
- **A pimple or yellowish crust on top.** As the wound begins to dry, a crust starts to form in the outer layer. If the crust is yellowish and if there is a formation of pimples on or near the wound, it could be septic.
- **Sores that look like blisters.** If there is a formation of sores which look like pockets of fluid around the area, the could be septic.
- **Pain that gets worse after a few days.** If the pain experienced increases over time, this could be a sign of a septic wound.
- **The wound hasn't healed.** If there's nothing wrong with the wound but it looks the same and hasn't closed up after 10 days, the wound may be septic. High fever. When a wound is septic, individuals tend to have a fever.

Causes.

Any wound that isn't properly cleaned and covered can allow bacteria, viruses or fungi to enter through the opening in the skin, leading to infection. Sepsis occurs when the body overreacts to infection, releasing chemicals into the bloodstream that ultimately cause organ failure and death. The best way to prevent sepsis is to prevent infection.

Diagnosis.

Check for the symptoms listed above. If you have one or more of these symptoms, a doctor or medical professional can check the wound to see if it is septic.

Treatment.

A septic wound is a medical emergency requiring immediate professional attention. Treatment with antibiotics and IV fluids is necessary.

Prevention.

Cuts and scrapes happen, but do not take a simple wound for granted. Wounds must be treated properly by cleaning and covering to prevent infection and sepsis. Always check for the telltale signs of infection. If you think you or someone you know has an infected wound, do not hesitate to seek immediate help. Check for high fever, cuts with watery discharge or pus, persistent red skin around the wound and swelling.

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