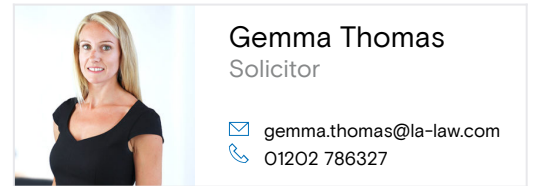


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# Sepsis claims – know your rights



Sepsis has been hitting headlines across the UK in recent years. Awareness of this potentially deadly infection is definitely on the rise but it is still a huge problem. According to [The UK Sepsis Trust](#), sepsis kills 5 people every hour in the UK, around 52,000 a year. It does not have to.

There are around 150,000 reported cases of sepsis in the UK each year. Over a third of these cases will be fatal and many survivors are left with permanent effects such as loss of limbs. Early diagnosis and treatment is crucial, or sepsis can very quickly lead to organ failure and death. With early diagnosis, sepsis can be effectively treated with antibiotics. This has led to sepsis being called the “most preventable cause of death and disability in Europe” by the [Global Sepsis Alliance](#).

## What is sepsis?

Sepsis is the immune system's overreaction to an infection. It is typical to present with flu-like symptoms but this can vary from person to person and symptoms present differently in adults and children.

Warning signs include:

- Fever and shivering
- Slurred speech or confusion
- Not passing urine
- Breathlessness
- Mottled or discoloured skin
- Children may also have fits, a rash or be extremely lethargic.

The infection can start anywhere in your body and can be localised or widespread. Examples of what can cause sepsis include a chest or urine infection, an infected wound or bite or a wound from trauma or surgery.

For more information, visit the [Sepsis Trust](#).

## What is being done about it?

In 2016, the government launched a sepsis awareness campaign with the objective of educating adults about the symptoms of sepsis. A scheme was also put in place to ensure that health professionals have the knowledge and skills to identify and treat sepsis.

Every healthcare provider now ought to have a policy or pathway on sepsis to be followed to ensure urgent treatment is provided. The NICE Guidelines say that antibiotics should be provided within the first hour of diagnosis.

## Sepsis in a hospital environment

Often, people in hospital environments have a higher risk of infection, which can develop to sepsis. This is because of chronic illness, age, or other risk factors. If you have a cannula, ventilator, catheter or any other intervention that breaks your skin, you are at risk of infection and medical professionals ought to be aware of the risk of sepsis. Similarly, surgical wounds can also become infected if sterile wound dressings are not properly applied.

Hospitals should take steps to reduce the risk of developing an infection such as sterile environment, well-ventilated rooms, sterilised medical equipment and appropriate wound management. Patients should be closely monitored for any sign of infection and, if it is known that a patient has an infection, medical staff ought to be vigilant for warning signs of sepsis.

## Sepsis claims

People can get very ill and die from sepsis even when they receive exemplary healthcare. However, there are occasions where symptoms are missed, diagnosis or treatment is delayed or treatment pathways have not been followed. If something has gone wrong with the healthcare provided to you or a loved one, you may want to consider bringing a compensation claim.

Cases involving injury or death from sepsis can be some of the most distressing because claimants will often have been through a period of rapid deterioration, a life-threatening illness and may have even lost a relative.

The amount of compensation that you could receive in a claim for injury due to sepsis can vary significantly. It will be largely dependent upon the circumstances of the case and can range from a few thousand pounds to

possibly millions of pounds for claims resulting in permanent neurological disability. If you have lost a relative, you are also able to bring a claim on behalf of their estate.

## **Need further advice for a sepsis compensation claim?**

Do you need assistance with a sepsis claim? The [medical negligence](#) team at Lester Aldridge frequently support people with sepsis claims so please contact our team today if you want to discuss this.