

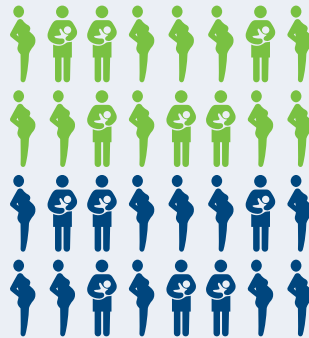
Preventing maternal morbidity: Is it sepsis? Know the signs, know what to do

Between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017, **469 women** were admitted to a high dependency unit or an intensive care unit, when they were **pregnant or recently pregnant**.

14% of these women had sepsis.

Sepsis is a 'life threatening condition that arises when the body's response to infection injures its own tissues and organs'. If sepsis is not recognised and treated promptly, it can lead to shock, multiple organ failure and death.

A review of 32 of the 67 sepsis cases found that with **earlier recognition and response**, the severity of the cases could have been...



... avoided
in 50%
of the cases

Always be alert for symptoms of sepsis.
Remember sepsis can be challenging to identify early on as the symptoms may be subtle and can mimic other symptoms of pregnancy.

Ensure women you provide care for understand early signs of infection at any time around pregnancy, and advise them to **seek help earlier than they would normally.**

Sepsis Know the signs:



Temperature
 $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ or $< 36^{\circ}\text{C}$
Shivering, fever, or very cold



Altered mental state or behaviour
Confusion or disorientation



Respiratory rate
 ≥ 25 breaths/min
Short of breath



Heart rate
 ≥ 100 beats/min
High heart rate



Systolic blood pressure
 < 90 mmHg
Clammy or sweaty skin



New onset of pain
Extreme pain or discomfort

**Refer to on-call
obstetric team
without delay**

Know what to do.
Know your
sepsis 6 + 2:

By doing these six simple things in the first hour, you can double the woman's chance of survival.

GIVE 3:

Give high-flow oxygen

Give a fluid challenge

Give IV antibiotics

TAKE 3:

Take appropriate cultures

Measure lactate

Measure urine output

CONSIDER 2:

Assess fetal state and consider delivery or evacuation of retained products of conception

Consider thromboprophylaxis

Preventing maternal morbidity: Is it sepsis? Know the signs, know what to do



Know the **signs of infection** and sepsis.



Familiarise yourself with the **maternity vital signs chart** in your DHB and local escalation pathway.



Ask about your local maternity service septic care bundle, which includes the **sepsis 6 + 2**, a tool to help you know what you need to do.



Work with your maternity service to have a **responsive escalation pathway**.



If the woman has **English as her second language, or a disability**, ensure you access suitable communication support, such as a professional interpreting service.

