

## Sepsis Management in Adults

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### PERSPECTIVE

Sepsis is an infection-related clinical syndrome characterized by systemic inflammation. From sepsis to septic shock, there is a spectrum of severity. When shock is present, mortality has been estimated to be between 10% and 40% of the population studied, depending on the population studied. In the management of patients with sepsis and septic shock, securing the airway (if indicated), correcting hypoxemia, and establishing venous access for the early administration of fluids and antibiotics are all priorities.

Stabilize respiration – all patients with sepsis who have indications for oxygenation should receive supplemental oxygen, and oxygenation should be monitored continuously with pulse oximetry. Although the ideal target values for peripheral saturation are unknown, we typically aim for 90 to 96 percent. Intubation and mechanical ventilation may be necessary to support the increased work of breathing that often occurs with sepsis, as well as for airway protection because encephalopathy and a low level of consciousness are common complications of sepsis.

Preliminary research – While access is being established and the airway stabilized, a brief history and examination, as well as laboratory, microbiologic (including blood cultures), and imaging studies are often obtained simultaneously.

It is preferable to obtain the following items as soon as possible (within 45 minutes of presentation), but fluids and antibiotics should not be delayed:

1. Complete blood counts with differential, chemistries, liver function tests, and coagulation studies with D-dimer level These studies' findings may help with diagnosis, determining the severity of sepsis, and establishing a baseline for monitoring therapeutic response.
2. Serum lactate – An elevated serum lactate level (e.g., >2

mmol/L or higher than the laboratory upper limit of normal) can indicate the severity of sepsis and is used to track the therapeutic response.

3. Peripheral blood cultures (aerobic and anaerobic cultures from at least two different sites), urinalysis, and microbiologic cultures from readily accessible sites from suspected sources (e.g., sputum, urine, intravascular catheter, wound or surgical site, body fluids). When possible, avoid drawing blood for cultures through an indwelling or central intravascular catheter, as ports are frequently colonized with skin flora, increasing the risk of a false-positive blood culture. A second specimen should be drawn from a peripheral venipuncture site if blood cultures are taken from an intravenous line.

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Respiratory stabilization is required for early sepsis management. All patients should be given additional oxygen. When supplemental oxygen fails to improve oxygenation, respiratory failure is imminent, or the airway cannot be protected, mechanical ventilation is recommended. Perfusion is measured after the patient's breathing has stabilized. Inadequate tissue perfusion is indicated by hypotension. Cold or clammy skin altered mental status, oliguria or anuria, and lactic acidosis are all symptoms of hypoperfusion.

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