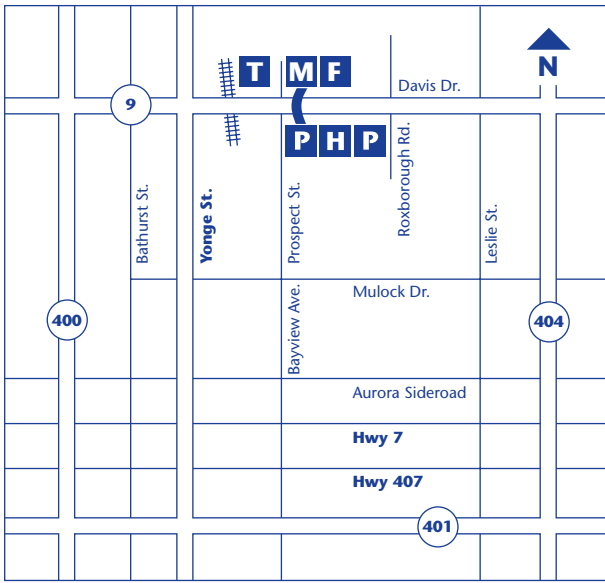


## How to find us:



# Sepsis

- T** The Tannery Mall, 465 Davis Drive
- M** Medical Arts Building, 581 Davis Drive
- F** Southlake Foundation, 615 Davis Drive
- P** Parking
- H** Southlake Regional Health Centre
- Bridge crossing Davis Drive. Accessible from  
P3 of the Parking Garage and Level 3  
of the Medical Arts Building.

For more information, contact:

**Southlake Regional Health Centre**  
596 Davis Drive  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 2P9  
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**SOUTHLAKE**  
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition that can affect a patient at any time, including after surgery or even after something as simple as a urinary tract infection. In some cases, patients may not know where it started. Patients who have sepsis can feel relatively normal one day to being admitted into an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) the next.

The occurrence of sepsis is increasing and becoming more common. This brochure is meant to provide information on sepsis and to help guide potential questions to the members of Southlake's healthcare team.

### **What is sepsis?**

Sepsis is a condition that can occur when the body is fighting a severe infection – like a urinary tract infection – that has spread via the bloodstream.

### **What causes sepsis?**

Bacteria is the most common cause of sepsis, however, viruses and fungi can also cause sepsis.

### **Who is at risk of developing sepsis?**

Some people are at higher risk of developing sepsis. Those people might include, but are not limited to:

- children and the elderly;
- anyone who is taking immunosuppressive medications (such as transplant recipients);
- people who are being treated with chemotherapy drugs or radiation; or
- people whose immune systems are not functioning well because of medical treatments that weaken the immune system.

If you are a patient at Southlake and you think you might be at a high risk for developing sepsis, please let a member of your healthcare team know your concerns.

### **Signs and symptoms of sepsis**

Many of the symptoms associated with sepsis are not specific, and could have many causes. If you think you may have sepsis, please contact your family doctor as soon as possible or visit your local emergency department. Some of the symptoms may include:

- fever (temperature greater than 38.9);
- chills and severe shaking;
- rapid heartbeat;
- rapid breathing (hyperventilation);
- confusion or delirium;
- low blood pressure;
- skin rash; and
- shaking.

### **How is sepsis diagnosed?**

Physicians and patients can look for an obvious infection, such as a urinary tract infection or pneumonia. Once the evidence of infection is found, then the presence of sepsis can be confirmed by finding bacteria in the patient's blood.

### **How is sepsis treated?**

Sepsis is treated through a variety of methods, including:

- an increase of fluids to maintain blood pressure (which helps to reduce damage to the body's organs);
- powerful antibiotics; and
- at times, admission to the ICU is required for close monitoring.

### **How to reduce the risk of sepsis**

Sepsis, especially among older adults, is subtle and the rapid progression makes recognition and treatment imperative. There are things people can do to reduce the risk, including practicing regular hand hygiene and receiving regular vaccinations (flu and pneumonia).