

Blood poisoning (septicemia), is a serious secondary infection that occurs when bacteria from an infection in your body go out of control and travel in the bloodstream to other areas of the body.

What to look for

While recovering from surgery, an infection, or a wound, a person may suffer blood poisoning or septic shock. Symptoms are described below...

- Red lines extending out from a boil.
- High fever and chills, rapid breathing, headache, and nausea
- Severe chills, low blood pressure, loss of appetite, and possibly loss of consciousness are potential signs of septic shock.

The invading bacteria must be stopped or the patient will run the risk of developing septic shock which is potentially fatal.

People who have just had surgery are the most at risk of developing blood poisoning.

Causes

Blood poisoning occurs because an infection has become uncontrolled and escaped from the original wound area and entered the bloodstream. Fever and shock are brought on because of the body's bacteria (that caused the infection) and your body's natural defences fighting it are stopping the blood flow to your body cells. Septic shock is the next stage if the infection is not helped.

Usually blood poisoning is the result of infected incisions, wounds or burns etc however, it can be created by other types of infections such as urinary tract infections, pneumonia and boils.

Traditional Treatment

If you suspect you have this condition or if your doctor suspects this is the case you will be hospitalised and given tests to confirm this.

Oral and intravenous antibiotics are given to this type of patient to fight the infections. The patient needs full medical attention during the critical period.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Natural remedies help aid recovery and in the prevention of a recurrence. Full hospital and medical care is needed if you suspect you have blood poisoning.

Herbal Therapies - Echinacea, Garlic - eat this for its antibacterial and antiviral action, or take garlic capsules daily.

If you develop a boil place a warm-water compress on it for 20 to 30 minutes three or four times daily until it bursts; this may take up to a week. Apply compresses for three days or until the boil is completely drained of pus.

When to seek further professional advice

- your symptoms are similar to the symptoms mentioned above, you should have immediate medical attention to stop the spread of infection and to prevent septic shock.
- If you develop a mouth infection, see your dentist for treatment or referral to a specialist
- If the boil becomes infected or if red lines extend from it, see your doctor.