

Sepsis Awareness Month: Fewer than Half of Americans Have Heard of this Devastating Illness

CDC Director Serving as World Sepsis Day Ambassador

Despite the fact that sepsis affects more than a million Americans each year and kills up to half of them, a new survey published by [Sepsis Alliance](#) found that fewer than half of all Americans have ever even heard of the term '[sepsis](#).'

Sepsis is a serious illness that can develop when the body's normal reaction to fight an infection goes awry and can quickly become life-threatening. The body's immune system releases chemicals into the blood to fight infections but sometimes those chemicals can cause inflammation, which can lead to blood clots and organ damage. In severe cases, sepsis can weaken the heart, shut down other organs, and may lead to death. Early recognition of patients with possible sepsis is critical for preventing severe outcomes.

“As a doctor, I have treated patients with sepsis and have seen first-hand the devastation it brings to patients and families,” said Dr. Frieden. “We have a long way to go to educate clinicians and inform the public about this all-too-common illness.”

CDC recognizes September as Sepsis Awareness Month and is working year round to raise awareness of sepsis, prevent it, and improve early detection and treatment. CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, is serving as the [Ambassador](#) for [World Sepsis Day](#) on September 13, 2014 and speaking at the [Rory Staunton Foundation Sepsis Forum](#) on September 17, 2014. CDC is participating in and supports several sepsis efforts this month.

[Sepsis](#) currently affects more than 1 million people every year and the number of cases has been increasing. Those at higher risk for sepsis include people with weakened immune systems, infants and children, elderly people, people with chronic illnesses and those who suffer severe burns or physical trauma. Patients who develop and survive sepsis have an increased risk of complications and death later, and they face higher healthcare costs and longer treatment.

###

[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES](#)

Prof. Dr. Konrad Reinhart, ML
Director of
Dep. for Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care
Chairman Global Sepsis Alliance
Erlanger Allee 101
07747 Jena

Germany

Phone +49 3641 9323101/11

Fax +49 3641 9323102/12

Cell phone +49 171 7535823

E-Mail konrad.reinhart@med.uni-jena.de

Website: www.world-sepsis-day.org



September | World
13 | Sepsis
2014 | Day