



#### Contact:

We hope this leaflet has answered some of your questions and has helped at what can be a traumatic time.

If you require any further support or details of our work please do email us.

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Registered Charity: 1088094

#### Severe Streptococcal Infections & Necrotising Fasciitis Support

The support group was founded in January 2000 as a result of Doreen Cartledge losing her dear son aged 23. His name was 'Lee Spark'.

He died from a Streptococcus milleri infection that developed into a life threatening infection necrotising fasciitis (known as the flesh-eating bug and gangrene).

The aims of the charity are to raise awareness by means of education so that a higher profile of NF may be raised in order that more lives may be saved.

Some streptococci and, in particular *Streptococcus pyogenes*, may cause severe and life-threatening infections. These include: streptococcal toxic shock syndrome, blood poisoning, and severe skin and soft tissue infections including necrotising fasciitis (NF) a condition with potentially high mortality.

The Lee Spark NF Foundation raises awareness of NF among healthcare professionals and patients through promotion of education and research. The Foundation aims to collaborate with, and participate in, on-going research projects to learn more about NF and apply this knowledge to save lives.

The support group offers information and support to survivors, bereaved, also friends and families of this horrific infection also medical clinicians at all levels of care.

Some of the questions you may already be asking are:

### What is necrotising fasciitis (NF)?

The term necrotising fasciitis (NF) comes from the words 'necrosis', which means death of a portion of tissue (flesh) and 'fascia', the name given to the sheets or bands of fibrous tissue that enclose and connect the muscles. NF results from severe infection involving the soft tissues below the skin, particularly the fascia. NF can affect any part of the body, but is most common in the upper leg.

While NF may be caused by a number of bacteria, one of the leading bacterial causes is *Streptococcus pyogenes*, also known as Group A *Streptococcus*. Although rare, streptococcal and other types of NF can occasionally result from healthcare. The mortality rate from NF can be as high as 50% if not recognised and treated promptly.

### What are the symptoms of NF?

NF may begin in an established wound (following either injury or surgery) or broken skin such as a leg ulcer, or even following a knock or bruise. Like many infections there may be fever and 'flu-like symptoms.

Excessive pain is an early warning symptom. Bacteria spread very rapidly in the tissues below the skin surfaces, well ahead of any visible changes in the overlying skin. Infection may progress at inches per hour; the patient rapidly becomes unwell with worsening 'flu-like symptoms, possible vomiting and diarrhoea with progressive deterioration that is out of proportion to visible changes in the skin of the infected area. If not treated quickly, the skin over the affected area becomes dusky and purple; blisters may form and the skin dies. By this stage, infection may have penetrated deep into the underlying tissues. Patients may develop shock, with collapse, low blood pressure, and failure of the liver, kidneys and other vital systems.

### Predisposing Factors

- Diabetes
- Surgery
- Mild trauma
- Fungal infections
- Low immunity
- Injecting drug use
- Non steroid anti-inflammatory drugs
- Steroids
- Bites
- Minor procedures

### Treatment of Necrotising Fasciitis

- Treatment may involve several of the following:
- Surgical
  - Treatment may involve several Debridement
  - Antibiotic Therapy
  - Induced Sedation
  - Intensive Care
  - Amputation
  - Plastic Surgery
- Treatment may also involve several of the following:
- Skin Grafts
  - Assisted Closure
  - Therapy Vacuum
  - Hyperbaric Oxygen