



SAFETY ALERT 01/24 – HAND INFECTION

What happened?

A novice rower sustained a blister during racing. Over the course of a subsequent training camp the blistering worsened and became seriously infected.

Why did it happen?

Despite application of antiseptic spray and taping whilst rowing the blistering became worse creating the conditions that allowed an infection to take hold.

What action was taken?

The rower was taken to a Minor Injuries Unit. A subsequent medical consultation concluded that the infection may have spread to the bone and there was a threat of sepsis.

What can others learn from this?

Blisters are not uncommon amongst rowers, particularly novices or those returning to the sport after a break. If blisters do develop then they should be kept as clean as possible and covered with a soft plaster or padded dressing. If the skin is still intact over the blister do not puncture it. If a blister has burst, then wash your hands before touching it and allow the fluid to drain before covering it. Seek medical attention if the blister is large or painful.

Sepsis is a risk from any infection and is a life threatening condition that arises when the body's response to an infection injures its own tissues and organs. Whilst an infected blister may not necessarily lead to sepsis, rowers should be alert to the possibility. The poster below provides guidance on the signs to look for.

The rowing environment emphasises the need to maintain good hand hygiene with waterborne diseases and other sources of infection being a continual risk. Clubs should ensure that provision is made to enable rowers to minimise this risk with appropriate washing facilities, first aid resources and by raising awareness. Rowsafe Scotland section 8.4 provides guidance on avoiding waterborne infections and diseases [RowSafe Scotlandv1 \(002\).pdf \(scottish-rowing.org.uk\)](#)

CHILDREN

A child may have sepsis if he or she:

- Is breathing very fast
- Has a 'fit' or convulsion
- Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
- Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
- Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch

ADULTS

An adult may have sepsis if they show any of these signs:

- S**lurred speech or confusion
- E**xtrême shivering or muscle pain
- P**assing no urine (in a day)
- S**evere breathlessness
- I**t feels like you're going to die
- S**kin mottled or discoloured

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS:

Call 111 or contact your GP if you're worried about an infection.

Call 999 or visit A&E if someone has one of the sepsis symptoms.

JUST ASK "COULD IT BE SEPSIS?"