

TRANSCRIPT OF MEDIA-Early detection, rapid treatment key to fighting sepsis

Dr. Leon Yeh, OSF leader involved in sepsis prevention efforts

Dr. Yeh stresses one of the most important lessons clinicians have learned is that treatment cannot wait for complete answers.

"I think it took some time for our people to understand that you didn't need to know exactly where the sepsis was coming from before you treated it," says Dr. Yeh, vice president Hospitalist, Emergency, and Diagnostic Medicine Service Line, OSF HealthCare. "The standard now is to administer broad-spectrum antibiotics. You cast a wide net for anything that could be causing this condition, and then you sort it out later." (:18)

Dr. Yeh explains that rapid intervention is critical because delays can have deadly consequences.

"The early literature on sepsis showed that with each hour of delay in antibiotics, there was a measurable increased mortality. That's why it's so important to get treatment early." (:13)

Efforts have focused on minimizing the use of invasive devices whenever possible.

"We've made great strides in that over the past few years to help reduce hospital-acquired infections, either by central lines or urinary catheters, for instance," Dr. Yeh says. "There are many interventions that we've put in place, from education toward bundles and best practices, both for providers and nurses." (:18)

One particularly effective strategy, the physician noted, is avoiding unnecessary procedures altogether.

"I think one intervention that's really notable is that we recognize it's hard to get an infection from lines that you don't place. If we can prevent placing a central line and prevent placing Foley [urinary] catheters, then those are infections that we naturally won't get." (:17)

People who are older with chronic conditions such as diabetes, or are immunocompromised, Dr. Yeh says, are more susceptible to infections and need to pay more attention when symptoms develop.

"If you get a cut or scrape, monitor those things. Certainly good local wound care and maybe an urgent care visit would be smart ... seeing your doctor. But, if things start to get out of control, meaning if you develop systemic symptoms where you feel ill or you're running a fever, that's not normal. That means there's spreading going on so that's when you really need to pay more attention," he recommends. (:22)

There is a condition known as post-sepsis syndrome, which can affect patients physically, mentally and psychologically.

"And it can be really hard to get back to where you were pre-illness," according to Dr. Yeh.

"Things like chronic fatigue, muscle and joint pains, depression, anxiety, post-

traumatic stress syndrome, as well as brain fog and trouble concentrating – those can all be symptoms that linger well after the hospitalization." (:24)