

## HOW CAN I GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS?

You can take specific steps to reduce your risk of sepsis, including sepsis caused by COVID-19, such as:

### 1 PREVENT INFECTIONS

Talk to your healthcare professional about steps you can take to prevent infections that can lead to sepsis, including:

- Take good care of chronic conditions.
- Get recommended vaccines, since vaccinations prevent some infections, but do not cure sepsis.

### 2 PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

- Wash your hands.
- Keep cuts and wounds clean and covered until healed.

### 3 KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A medical assessment by a healthcare professional is needed to confirm sepsis.

### 4 ACT FAST

Sepsis is a medical emergency. If you or your loved one has an infection that's not getting better or is getting worse, **ACT FAST**. Get medical care **IMMEDIATELY**. Ask your healthcare professional, "Could this infection be leading to sepsis?" and if you should go to the emergency room.



To learn more about sepsis and how to prevent infections, visit [www.cdc.gov/sepsis](http://www.cdc.gov/sepsis) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

## FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

# IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT SEPSIS.

Infections put you and your family at risk for a life-threatening condition called sepsis.

**GET AHEAD**  
OF SEPSIS

KNOW THE RISKS. SPOT THE SIGNS. ACT FAST.



## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SEPSIS?

A person with sepsis might have one or more of the following signs or symptoms:



High heart rate or weak pulse



Fever, shivering, or feeling very cold



Confusion or disorientation



Shortness of breath



Extreme pain or discomfort



Clammy or sweaty skin

A medical assessment by a healthcare professional is needed to confirm sepsis.

Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection, including COVID-19, can lead to sepsis. Each year:

- About **1.7 million** adults in America develop sepsis.
- At least **350,000** adults who develop sepsis die during their hospitalization or are discharged to hospice.
- **1 in 3** people who dies in a hospital had sepsis during that hospitalization.
- Sepsis, or the infection causing sepsis, starts before a patient goes to the hospital in nearly **87%** of cases.

## WHAT IS SEPSIS?

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency. Sepsis happens when an infection you already have triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. Infections that lead to sepsis most often start in the lung, urinary tract, skin, or gastrointestinal tract. Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

## IS SEPSIS CONTAGIOUS?

You can't spread sepsis to other people. However, an infection can lead to sepsis, and you can spread some infections to other people.

## WHAT CAUSES SEPSIS?

Infections put you and your family at risk for sepsis. When germs get into a person's body, they can cause an infection. If you don't stop that infection, it can cause sepsis. Bacterial infections cause most cases of sepsis. Sepsis can also be a result of other infections, including viral infections, such as COVID-19 or influenza, or fungal infections.

## WHO IS AT RISK FOR SEPSIS?

Anyone can develop sepsis, but some people are at higher risk for sepsis:

**65+**

Adults 65 or older



People with weakened immune systems



People with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease



People with recent severe illness or hospitalization, including due to severe COVID-19



People who survived sepsis



Children younger than one