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 can put you or your loved one 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.

WHO IS AT RISK?
Some people are at higher risk for sepsis:
HOW CAN I GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS?
As a patient, you can take specific steps to reduce your risk of sepsis, including 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.

2. **PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE**
   - Remember to wash your hands and keep cuts clean and covered until healed.

3. **KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**
   - A patient with sepsis might have one or more of the following signs or symptoms. A medical assessment by a healthcare professional is needed to confirm sepsis.

4. **ACT FAST**
   - Sepsis is a medical emergency. ACT FAST.

If you or your loved one has an infection that’s not getting better or is getting worse, ACT FAST. Get medical care IMMEDIATELY either in-person, or at minimum, through telehealth services. Ask your healthcare professional, “Could this infection be leading to sepsis?” and if you should go to the emergency room for medical assessment.

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.