FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN HOSPITALS AND HOME CARE

BE VIGILANT. PROTECT YOUR PATIENTS FROM SEPSIS.

More than 1.5 million people get sepsis each year in the U.S.
At least 250,000 Americans die from sepsis each year.

Sepsis is a medical emergency. Be alert to the signs and, when you suspect sepsis, act fast and initiate care.

SPOT THE SIGNS
Sepsis is the body’s extreme response to an infection. It is life-threatening, and without prompt treatment, often rapidly leads to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. It happens when an infection your patient already has—like in their skin, lungs, or urinary tract—triggers a chain reaction throughout their body.

KNOW THE RISKS
Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection can lead to sepsis. Some people are at higher risk of infection and sepsis:
• Adults 65 or older
• People with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease
• People with weakened immune systems
• Children younger than one
The most frequently identified pathogens that cause infections that can develop into sepsis include Staphylococcus aureus (staph), Escherichia coli (E. coli), and some types of Streptococcus.

PREVENT INFECTIONS AND ACT FAST
You play a critical role. Remember to:
• Act fast if you suspect sepsis, or if your patients’ infections are not getting better or are getting worse. Signs of sepsis can include any one or a combination of the following:

  • Confusion or disorientation
  • Shortness of breath
  • High heart rate
  • Fever, or shivering, or feeling very cold
  • Extreme pain or discomfort
  • Clammy or sweaty skin

• Prevent infections by following infection practices (e.g. hand hygiene, catheter removal) and ensuring patients receive recommended vaccines.
• Ensure patients’ cuts are kept clean and covered until healed.

To learn more about sepsis and how to prevent infections, visit www.cdc.gov/sepsis.