How can I get ahead of sepsis?

You can take specific steps to reduce your risk of sepsis, such as:

1 Prevent infections

Talk to a 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 can prevent or reduce the severity of some infections, which can then lead to sepsis.

2 Practice good hygiene

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

3 Know the signs and symptoms of sepsis

Healthcare professionals should immediately evaluate and treat people who might have 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 a healthcare professional, "Could this infection be leading to sepsis?" and if you should go to the emergency room.

GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS

Learn more at
cdc.gov/sepsis

CDC

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

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

Healthcare professionals should immediately evaluate and treat people who might have sepsis.

Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection 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.
- Most cases of sepsis start **before** a patient goes to the hospital.

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.

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.

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.

Who is at risk for sepsis?

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

65+ Adults 65 or older

Children younger than one

People who survived sepsis

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

People with recent severe illness, surgery, or hospitalization

People with weakened immune systems

Women who are pregnant or postpartum