

Protect yourself and your family from sepsis.



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

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.

GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS

KNOW THE RISKS.
SPOT THE SIGNS.
ACT FAST.

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.



Take good care of chronic conditions



Get recommended vaccines



Keep hands clean



Keep cuts and wounds clean and covered until healed

3. Know the signs and symptoms

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 patients 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.

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Learn more at
[cdc.gov/sepsis](https://www.cdc.gov/sepsis)

