

GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS

KNOW THE RISKS.
SPOT THE SIGNS.
ACT FAST.

Youth Counselors, Coaches, and Other Volunteers: *Get Ahead of Sepsis*

As you prepare for a new season of memory-making, don't forget to keep your *[customize: team's, campers', youth group's]* health and safety top of mind. We all know the importance of water safety, sun protection, and preventing tick and mosquito bites. Here's another safety tip to add to your list: [Learn the facts about sepsis.](#)

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency that 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.

Did you know?

- Most sepsis cases in children and young adults start before they go to the hospital.¹
- Most children and young adults with sepsis have at least one underlying medical condition.^{1,2}
- Nearly a third of children and young adults with sepsis had a healthcare visit the week before they were hospitalized.¹

[customize for your audience, choose one lead-in] Just as you remind campers to never swim alone and always use sunscreen and EPA-registered bug repellent, you can teach your camp staff and campers to take steps to reduce the risk of sepsis:

[customize for your audience, choose one lead-in] Just as you remind players to stretch and always wear sunscreen, you can teach your assistant coaches and other volunteers to take steps to reduce the risk of sepsis among your team:

[customize for your audience, choose one lead-in] Just as you remind your volunteers to learn First Aid and know your organization's safety protocol, you can teach them how to take steps to reduce the risk of sepsis in children:

1. **Prevent infections.** Know if your youth have weakened immune systems or chronic conditions. Make sure a medical professional has signed off on their participation and learn how you can help them take good care of these conditions while enjoying activities. Establish vaccination policies for your camp and know the vaccination status of your campers and staff.
2. **Practice good hygiene.** Remind youth to wash their hands and keep cuts and wounds clean and covered until healed. If a child develops an infection, share regular updates with the parents or caregivers about how the infection is progressing until it is healed.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofad218>

² <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.6004>



3. Know the signs and symptoms of sepsis. A child with sepsis might have one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

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

Download and hang the [“Protect Children from Sepsis” poster](#) in your medical office or community center. An urgent medical assessment by a healthcare professional is needed to confirm sepsis.

4. Act fast. If a child has an infection that’s not getting better or is getting worse, get medical care immediately. Ask a healthcare professional, “Could this infection be leading to sepsis?” and if the child should go to the emergency room. Healthcare professionals should immediately evaluate and treat people who might have sepsis.

By understanding the signs and symptoms of sepsis and taking preventive measures, your staff and volunteers can ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all children.

