

# GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS

FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

KNOW THE RISKS. SPOT THE SIGNS. ACT FAST.

# STAY HEALTHY. PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SEPSIS.

It's time to talk about sepsis. Ask your doctor or nurse, **"How can I prevent infections?"**

Take charge of your health. Chronic conditions, such as diabetes, put you at risk for infections that can lead to a life-threatening condition called sepsis.

## WHAT IS SEPSIS?

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is life-threatening, and without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

Sepsis happens when an infection you already have—in your skin, lungs, urinary tract or somewhere else—triggers a chain reaction throughout your body.

## AM I AT RISK?

**Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection can lead to sepsis.** People with chronic conditions such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease, are at higher risk of developing infections that can lead to sepsis. Sepsis also more commonly occurs in:

- Adults 65 or older
- People with weakened immune systems
- Children younger than one

The most frequently identified germs that cause infections that can develop into sepsis include *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph), *Escherichia coli* (E. coli), and some types of *Streptococcus*.

## HOW CAN I GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS?

1. Talk to your doctor or nurse about steps you can take to prevent infections. Some steps include taking good care of chronic conditions and getting recommended vaccines.
2. Practice good hygiene, such as handwashing, and keeping cuts clean and covered until healed.
3. Know the symptoms of sepsis.
4. ACT FAST. Get medical care IMMEDIATELY if you suspect sepsis or have an infection that's not getting better or is getting worse.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms 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

**Sepsis is a medical emergency. Time matters.** If you or your loved one suspects sepsis or has an infection that's not getting better or is getting worse, ask your doctor or nurse, **"Could this infection be leading to sepsis?"**

To learn more about sepsis and how to prevent infections, visit [www.cdc.gov/sepsis](http://www.cdc.gov/sepsis).

