

Caregiver Bulletin

Sepsis



Did you know?

According to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- 1.7 million people are diagnosed with sepsis annually in the United States.
- 350,000 people die annually in the United States from sepsis.

According to the Sepsis Alliance:

- Sepsis is the number one cost of hospitalizations in the United States.
- Costs for hospitalization and skilled nursing are estimated at \$62 billion annually.
- The cost of hospitalization for a person diagnosed with sepsis is double that of all other conditions.
- Sepsis is the primary reason people are readmitted to hospitals.

What is a sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening medical diagnosis requiring rapid diagnosis and treatment. Your body's immune system works to fight off germs such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. Your immune system may require support from medications to help fight the infection. Sometimes medications do not work, which leads to sepsis or septicemia. Sepsis is your body's response to the infection which leads to organ damage and even death.

What are common signs or symptoms to look out for?

- Temperature changes: higher or lower than normal
 - Shivering.
 - Sweating.
- Changes to heart rate:
 - Higher than normal (tachycardia); or
 - Lower than normal (bradycardia).
- Known or suspected infection.
- Decrease in urine output.
 - Ideally adults should urinate every 3-4 hours.
 - Ideally infants should urinate every 1-3 hours.
- Confusion or sleepiness.
- Severe pain or discomfort.
- Shortness of breath or rapid breathing.
- Sweaty "clammy" skin.

<https://clinicalexcellence.qld.gov.au/priority-areas/safety-and-quality/sepsis/adult-sepsis>

Learn More

- [What is Sepsis](#) Video
- [Sepsis](#)- U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Sepsis Alliance](#)



Sepsis

Who's at risk?

- Infants.
- People over the age of 65.
- People with a chronic disease or illness (for example, chronic kidney, liver disease, or uncontrolled diabetes.)
- People with weakened immune systems (for example, cancer or HIV/AIDS).
- People who are hospitalized.
- People who have problems with malnutrition.
- People who are unable move or shift their weight independently.
- People who have recurring infections such as urinary tract infections or pneumonia.
- People previously diagnosed with sepsis.

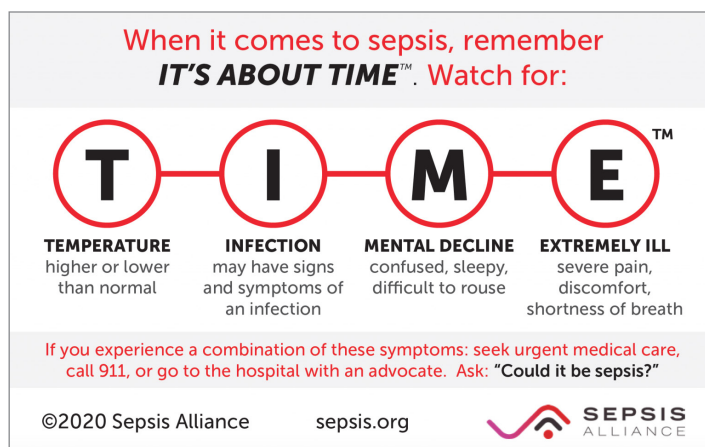
Common causes?

- Gastrointestinal tract infections.
- Constipation or impaction of bowels.
- Pneumonia.
- Pressure injuries.
- Urinary tract infections.

What treatment is needed?

Seek emergency medical care or call 911 if sepsis is suspected.

Medical providers will run a series of tests, including taking your blood to identify infection and inflammation in your body. Blood work will rule out infections and provide a better understanding of treatment options, including medications.



What can I do to prevent sepsis?

- Practice good hygiene
 - Hand washing.
 - Keep wounds clean and covered.
 - Keep skin clean and dry.
 - Ensure good personal hygiene is performed, particularly surrounding urinary or bowel incontinence.
- Use precautions and personal protective equipment, such as masks or gloves when visiting a person who is ill.
- Get recommended vaccines such as influenza, pneumonia, and COVID-19.
- Following medical provider recommendations.
 - Take the entire course of prescribed medications.
 - Monitor for signs of worsening illness or injury.
 - Notify your medical provider if your symptoms do not improve.
- Eat a well-balanced diet
 - Follow prescribed diet and fluid textures to prevent aspiration.
- Stay hydrated.
- Keep track of bowel movements and take medication as needed to prevent constipation.