

# Protect your patients from **sepsis**.



## How can I **get ahead of sepsis**?

- **Prevent infections** by following infection control practices. This includes hand hygiene, proper management of indwelling devices, and ensuring patients receive recommended vaccinations. During periods of high respiratory virus activity, consider wearing a mask when around people outside your household, particularly in your facility.
- **Educate your patients and their families about:**
  - Preventing infections.
  - Keeping cuts and wounds clean and covered until healed. For postpartum patients who had a Cesarean delivery, be sure they know how to care for their incision and who to contact if they have questions.
  - Managing chronic conditions.
  - Recognizing early signs and symptoms of worsening infection and sepsis, and seeking immediate care if signs and symptoms are present.
- **Know sepsis signs and symptoms** to identify and treat patients early.
- **Act fast** if you suspect sepsis.

## What should I do if I **suspect sepsis**?

Ensure your patients have access to a thorough hospital-based evaluation in a facility with comprehensive pregnancy care. If not available at your facility, follow your facility's policies and procedures for a medical emergency and have your patients transferred to a facility with the level of care they need.



**Sepsis is a medical emergency.**

**You play a critical role.**

**Protect your patients by  
**acting fast.****

**You should immediately  
evaluate and treat  
patients who might  
have sepsis.**

**With your fast recognition  
and treatment, most  
patients survive.**

**GET AHEAD  
OF SEPSIS**

KNOW THE RISKS.  
SPOT THE SIGNS.  
ACT FAST.

## Who is at risk for sepsis?

Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection can lead to sepsis. Some people are at higher risk for sepsis:



**Women who are pregnant or postpartum**



**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 hospital care**



**People with weakened immune systems**

## What are the signs and symptoms of sepsis?

Be vigilant of specific pregnancy-related conditions that can increase risk of infection. These conditions include premature rupture of membranes, recent Cesarean delivery, or retained tissue from the pregnancy that may place your patient at higher risk of developing an infection.

If a patient has sepsis, you may notice one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

- Clammy or sweaty skin
- Extreme pain or discomfort
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Severe vaginal bleeding
- Redness or drainage from Cesarean delivery incision
- Confusion
- Fever, shivering, or feeling very cold
- High heart rate or low blood pressure
- Breast redness or pain
- Shortness of breath

## Women who are pregnant or postpartum are at higher risk for sepsis because of:

- Changes in the immune system that occur during pregnancy
- Frequent interaction with the healthcare setting, which can increase the risk of healthcare-associated infections
- Undergoing medical procedures related to pregnancy care, such as Cesarean delivery
- Complications of pregnancy that can lead to infection, including premature rupture of membranes or retained tissue from the pregnancy



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

