

# Sepsis in Persons Receiving Chronic Dialysis: What **You** Need to Know



## Key Points

- Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. Sepsis is a life-threatening condition and a medical emergency.
- Anyone can develop sepsis, but some people are at higher risk including those with weakened immune systems, such as people with end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) receiving chronic dialysis.
- Know how to protect yourself and *Get Ahead of Sepsis*.

## How Can You **Get Ahead of Sepsis?**

Know the **signs and symptoms** of sepsis.

A person might have one or more of the following signs or symptoms:



High heart rate  
or weak pulse



Fever, shivering,  
or feeling  
very cold\*



New onset  
or increased  
confusion or  
disorientation



Shortness  
of breath



Extreme pain  
or discomfort



Clammy or  
sweaty skin

\*Patients with ESKD may have a lower resting body temperature than people without ESKD, but a low or normal body temperature does not rule out sepsis.

**GET AHEAD  
OF SEPSIS**

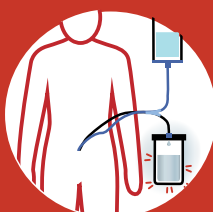
KNOW THE RISKS.  
SPOT THE SIGNS.  
ACT FAST.

Persons with ESKD on chronic dialysis have a **high risk of infection**, which can sometimes lead to sepsis.

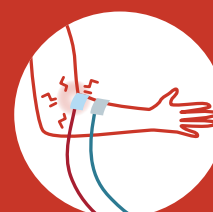
Be aware of signs of infection that are specific to persons receiving chronic dialysis:



Abdominal pain, distention,  
or vomiting in patients  
receiving peritoneal dialysis



Cloudy peritoneal  
dialysis fluid



Dialysis access site complications,  
including redness, swelling,  
or discharge at the site

Your healthcare professional team should immediately evaluate and treat you if they suspect sepsis.

## Talk to your healthcare professional team about steps to take to prevent infections that can lead to sepsis.

- Take good care of chronic conditions, such as diabetes mellitus, lung disease, and cancer.
- Get recommended vaccines. Vaccinations can prevent some infections, which may reduce your risk of getting sepsis.
- Ask your healthcare professional team if you can get a fistula or graft for your dialysis treatment if you have a catheter.
- Care for your dialysis access at home.

## Practice good hygiene.

- Clean your hands often.
- Keep cuts and wounds clean and covered until healed.
- Catheter sites should always be kept clean and dry. Hemodialysis catheter sites should always be covered.

## Sepsis is a medical emergency.

If you or your loved one has an infection that is not getting better or is getting worse, act fast. Get medical care immediately. Ask your healthcare professional team, “Could this infection be leading to sepsis?” and if you should go to the emergency room.



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



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