

# Protect your patients from sepsis.



## How can I get ahead of sepsis?

- **Know sepsis signs and symptoms** to identify and treat patients early.
- **Act fast** if you suspect sepsis.
- **Prevent infections** by following infection control practices (e.g., hand hygiene, appropriate catheter management) and ensuring patients receive recommended vaccines.
- **Educate your patients and their families about:**
  - Preventing infections.
  - Keeping cuts and wounds clean and covered until healed.
  - Managing chronic conditions.
  - Recognizing early signs and symptoms of worsening infection and sepsis.
  - Seeking immediate care if signs and symptoms are present.

## What should I do if I suspect sepsis?

- **Know your facility's guidance for diagnosing and managing sepsis.**
- **Immediately alert the healthcare professional overseeing care of the patient if it is not you.**
- **Start antibiotics as soon as possible in addition to other therapies appropriate for the patient.** If a specific bacterial cause of sepsis is known, therapy should be targeted to optimize treatment, and broad-spectrum antibiotics might not be needed.
- **Check patient progress frequently.** Treatment requires urgent medical care, usually in an intensive care unit in a hospital, and includes careful monitoring of vital signs and often antibiotics. Early and frequent reassessment of patients with sepsis should be undertaken to determine the appropriate duration and type of therapy.



Sepsis is a medical emergency.

You play a critical role.

Protect your patients by **acting fast.**

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 develop sepsis, but some people are at higher risk for sepsis:

- 
**Adults 65 or older**
- 
**People with weakened immune systems**
- 
**People with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease**
- 
**People with recent severe illness, surgery, or hospitalization**
- 
**People who survived sepsis**
- 
**Children younger than one**
- 
**People who are pregnant or post-partum**

## What are the signs and symptoms of sepsis?

A patient with sepsis might have one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

- 
**High heart rate or low blood pressure**
- 
**Fever, shivering, or feeling very cold**
- 
**Confusion or disorientation**
- 
**Shortness of breath**
- 
**Extreme pain or discomfort**
- 
**Clammy or sweaty skin**

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

## What causes sepsis?

Infections put your patients at risk for sepsis. Bacterial infections cause most cases of sepsis. The most frequently identified bacterial pathogens that cause infections that can develop into sepsis include *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph), *Escherichia coli* (E. coli), and some types of *Streptococcus* (strep). Sepsis can also be a result of other infections, including viral infections, such as COVID-19 or influenza, or fungal infections. Infections that lead to sepsis most often start in the lung, urinary tract, skin, or gastrointestinal tract.



Lung



Urinary tract



Skin



Gastrointestinal tract

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

