

## What Sepsis Is

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition due to the body's overwhelming response to a bacterial, viral or fungal infection. The body's reaction causes damage to its own tissues and organs. Infections that lead to sepsis often start in the lung, urinary tract, skin or gastrointestinal tract.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of sepsis can vary from person to person and include:

- Change in mental status (confusion or disorientation)
- Shortness of breath
- Fever, shivering, or feeling cold
- Lightheadedness
- Decreased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate

## Who is At Risk

Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection can lead to sepsis. Common risk factors include:

- Adults 65 or older
- People with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer and kidney disease
- People with weakened immune systems
- People with recent severe illness or hospitalization
- Children younger than one year

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## What To Do If You Suspect Sepsis

- Know your facility's guidance for diagnosing and managing sepsis
- Immediately alert the healthcare professional overseeing care of the patient/resident

## Treatment

Treatment for sepsis is most effective when started early. The sepsis bundle includes:

- **Fluid resuscitation:** establish vascular access and promptly administer intravenous fluids
- **Cultures:** collect cultures promptly, utilizing proper specimen collection and handling to ensure accurate results
- **Antibiotics:** administer antibiotics promptly
- **Monitoring:** check patient/resident progress frequently (vital signs, urine output, mental status, labs, etc.)

## Prevention

- Recognize infections early
- Follow infection prevention and control guidelines such as hand hygiene and appropriate indwelling device insertion and management (urinary caths, IVs, etc.)

Think Sepsis. Time matters.  
Know the Risks. Spot the Signs. Act Fast.



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