# 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:

**65+** Adults 65 or older

People with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease

People who survived sepsis

People who are pregnant or post-partum

People with weakened immune systems

People with recent severe illness, surgery, or hospitalization

Children younger than one

# 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

Confusion or disorientation

Extreme pain or discomfort

Fever, shivering, or feeling very cold

Shortness of breath

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 among people with 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**

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