



# Signs of Infection and Sepsis at Home

Common infections can sometimes lead to sepsis. It's important to know the signs and symptoms and act fast if you suspect sepsis.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

## ACTION STEPS

- My heartbeat and breathing feel normal to me.
- I have not had a fever in the past 24 hours, and I am not taking medicine for a fever.
- I do not have chills or feel cold.
- My energy level is normal.
- I can think clearly.
- I feel well.
- I have taken my antibiotics as prescribed.
- I have a wound or IV site and it is not painful, red, draining pus or smelling bad.

No need for concern, as I am healing normally.

- Watch every day for signs of infection (see back).
- Continue to take my medications as ordered, especially if I'm recovering from an infection or illness.
- Keep my doctor and other appointments.
- Follow instructions if I'm caring for a wound or IV site.
- Wash my hands and avoid anyone who is ill.

- My heartbeat feels faster than normal.
- My breathing is a bit more difficult and faster than usual.
- I'm coughing.
- I have a fever between 100°F and 101.4°F.
- I feel chilled and cannot get warm. I am shivering, or my teeth are chattering.
- I am too tired to do most of my usual activities.
- I do not feel well.
- My thinking is slow – my head is “fuzzy.”
- I have a bad cough.
- I am not urinating as much as usual or when I do urinate, it burns, is cloudy or smells bad.
- My wound or IV site has changed.

I should pay close attention to my signs and symptoms.

- Contact my doctor or current healthcare professional (i.e., home health nurse, hospice nurse), especially if I have been recently ill or had surgery.
- Ask if I might have an infection or sepsis.

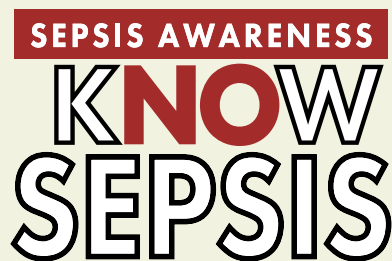
- My heartbeat or breathing is very fast.
- My temperature is greater than 101.5°F.
- My temperature is less than 96.8°F.
- My skin and fingernails are pale or blue.
- I feel sick, very tired, weak and achy.
- People say I am not making sense.
- My cough is much worse.
- I have not urinated for five hours or more.
- My wound or IV site has changed – it is now painful, red, draining pus or smelling bad.

I need to go to the Emergency Department for evaluation.

- Act fast – Sepsis is serious! Seek medical care.
- Ask to be evaluated immediately because you are concerned about sepsis.



# Know Sepsis



Sepsis is the 3rd leading cause of death in the U.S. after heart disease and cancer, killing more than 270,000 people each year.

Sepsis is a medical emergency which should be treated quickly to reduce the risk of death.

As many as 80% of sepsis deaths could be prevented with rapid recognition and treatment.

## Symptom Acronyms

### SEPSIS

- S – Shivering, fever or very cold
- E – Extreme pain or discomfort
- P – Pale or discolored skin
- S – Sleepy, difficult to rouse or confused
- I – “I feel like I might die”
- S – Short of breath

## Infection Prevention = Sepsis Prevention

- Practice hand hygiene.
- Practice proper wound care.
- Get recommended vaccines (e.g. flu & pneumonia).
- Take care of chronic conditions (e.g. diabetes, heart disease).
- Know the symptoms of sepsis, and ACT FAST by seeking medical care if an infection is not getting better with treatment.

Visit [nghs.com/sepsis](http://nghs.com/sepsis) for more information.



Northeast Georgia Health System