

Sepsis

What you need to know

Sepsis is a serious health threat caused by your body's response to infection. It can lead to organ failure and even death, but knowing the signs and symptoms can help you take early action to survive sepsis. Additionally, being aware of how to manage sepsis will decrease the likelihood of becoming seriously ill.

What Is Sepsis? Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection which can lead to inflammation, tissue damage, organ failure and death. It is one of the leading causes of death among critically ill people. Sepsis can occur anywhere, but it is often seen in the respiratory system including your lungs; the digestive system including stomach and intestines; and in the urinary system including the kidneys and bladder.

The following groups are most at risk for developing sepsis:

- Older adults
- Males
- People who are immunocompromised
- People with chronic conditions
- Blacks/African-Americans

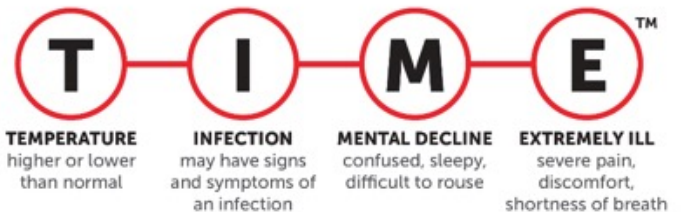
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Sepsis often brings with it the following symptoms, which are easy to remember using the SEPSIS acronym:

- S** Shivering, fever or feeling very cold
- E** Extreme pain or general discomfort
- P** Pale or discolored skin
- I** "I feel like I might die"
- S** Shortness of breath

Another way to know what to watch for is to recall that taking action against sepsis is all about time:

When it comes to sepsis, remember **IT'S ABOUT TIME™**. Watch for:



If you experience a combination of these symptoms: seek urgent medical care, call 911, or go to the hospital with an advocate. Ask: "Could it be sepsis?"

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MANAGING SEPSIS

You also can help manage the chances of becoming seriously ill with sepsis through the following:

- Taking medications as instructed by your healthcare provider
- Eating a healthy diet and drinking enough fluid (water)
- Limiting alcohol use
- Gradually returning to normal activities as advised by your healthcare provider
- Preventing infections by practicing good hygiene
- Managing stress in ways such as meditation, breathing exercises and muscle relaxation

TAKE ACTION

Sepsis is a medical emergency. If you think you or a loved one has sepsis, contact your doctor or medical provider, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Tell the medical provider that you are concerned this may be sepsis. You may even want to bring this brochure with you to help describe the symptoms.

REMEMBER

- 1. REPORT** symptoms
- 2. RECEIVE** treatment
- 3. RECOVER** quickly

SOURCE: Elsevier Interactive Patient Education

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