

# Sepsis

**What is Sepsis** ⇨ The body's overwhelming response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, amputations and death.

**Who it Hurts** ⇨ Sepsis is an equal-opportunity killer impacting people of all ages and levels of health.

**Spot the Signs** ⇨ An infection with any combination of the following symptoms could mean sepsis:



**Confusion or disorientation**



**Fast heart rate**



**Shortness of breath**



**Fever, shivering or feeling cold**



**Extreme pain or discomfort**



**Clammy or sweaty skin**

**Act fast if you suspect sepsis. Seek medical care immediately!  
Call your healthcare provider. Say "I suspect sepsis."**

## Do your part... Protect, Prevent and Preserve



Cover your cough



Wash your hands



Stay up-to-date with immunizations



Stay home when sick



Take antibiotics responsibly



Lives depend on it

## Signs of Infection and Sepsis at Home

- My heartbeat is as usual. Breathing is normal for me
- I have not had a fever in the past 24 hours and am not taking medicine for a fever
- I do not feel chilled
- My energy level is as usual

- My thinking is clear
- I feel well
- I have taken my antibiotics as prescribed
- I have a wound or IV site, it is not painful, red, draining pus or smelling bad

**Doing Great!**  
No action is needed.

- My heartbeat is faster than usual
- My breathing is a bit more difficult and faster than usual
- I have a fever between 100F and 101.4F
- I feel chilled and cannot get warm. I am shivering or my teeth are chattering
- I do not feel well

- I feel confused or not thinking clearly
- I am too tired to do most of my usual activities
- I have a bad cough or my cough has changed
- How often I urinate has changed. When I do urinate, it burns, is cloudy or smells bad
- My wound or IV site has changed

**Take action NOW!**  
Call your healthcare provider.

- My heartbeat is very fast
- My breathing is very fast and more difficult
- My temperature is below 96.8F. My skin or nails are pale or blue
- My fever is 101.5F or more
- I have not urinated for 5 or more hours

- I am very tired. I cannot do my usual activities
- My caregivers tell me I am not making sense
- I feel sick
- My cough is much worse
- My wound or IV site is painful, red, smells bad or has pus

**Take action NOW!**  
Call your healthcare provider. Say "I suspect sepsis"

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov); World Health Organization, [who.int](http://who.int); Choosing Wisely, [choosingwisely.org](http://choosingwisely.org). This material was prepared by Great Plains Quality Innovation Network, a Quality Innovation Network – Quality Improvement Organization, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS.

12SOW/GPQIN/QIN-QIO-128/1021