



Health Alert

Tips To Help You Get Ahead Of Sepsis

(NAPSA)—Each year, more than 1.5 million Americans develop a life-threatening condition called sepsis and at least 250,000 die as a result. That's why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging everyone to *Get Ahead of Sepsis*: know the risks, spot the signs and act fast.

What Is Sepsis?

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

Sepsis happens when an infection you already have—in your skin, lungs, urinary tract or somewhere else—triggers a chain reaction throughout your body.

Who's At Risk?

Anyone can get an infection, and almost any infection can lead to sepsis. Some people are at higher risk:



- Adults 65 or older
- People with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and kidney disease
- People with weakened immune systems
- Children younger than one.

The most frequently identified germs that cause infections that can develop into sepsis include *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph), *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) and some types of *Streptococcus*.

What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms of sepsis can include any one or a combination of the following:

- Confusion or disorientation
- Shortness of breath
- High heart rate
- Fever, or shivering, or feeling very cold
- Extreme pain or discomfort
- Clammy, sweaty skin.

How Can I Get Ahead of Sepsis?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about



Pay attention to infections. If an infection doesn't get better, seek medical care immediately.

how to prevent infections. Some things they might suggest are to take good care of chronic conditions and to get recommended vaccines. Also, remember to practice good hygiene, such as handwashing and keeping cuts clean and covered until healed. If you or your loved one has an infection that isn't getting better or is getting worse, ask your doctor or nurse "Could this infection be leading to sepsis?"

What Is CDC Doing?

CDC will continue to study the risk factors for sepsis; help healthcare professionals, patients and their families recognize the symptoms of sepsis; develop more reliable ways to measure the effects of successful interventions; and encourage infection prevention through vaccination programs, chronic disease management, as well as antibiotic use programs.

Antibiotics are critical tools to fight infections and sepsis. Healthcare professionals should ensure patients receive the right drug at the right dose and time. It is also important for healthcare professionals to reassess the need for antibiotics and be sure the medicine given is the safest and most effective for the patient.

What Can You Do?

Act fast: Get medical care immediately if you suspect sepsis or have an infection that's not getting better or is getting worse.

How Can You Learn More?

For more facts about how to *Get Ahead of Sepsis* and to access materials, visit www.cdc.gov/sepsis. To learn more about *Be Antibiotics Aware* resources and antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.