



# Fact Sheet *on* Sepsis

Sepsis is your body's overwhelming response to infection or injury, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, amputations, and death.

## Who Gets Sepsis?

While sepsis is more likely to affect very young children, older adults, people with chronic illnesses, and those with weakened immune systems, sepsis is an equal-opportunity killer, affecting people of all ages and levels of health.

## What Are the Symptoms?

Sepsis is a toxic response to an infection. There is no single sign or symptom of sepsis. It is, rather, a combination of symptoms. Symptoms can include any of the following:

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

If you see a combination of these symptoms, especially if there is a recent history of a cut, surgery, invasive procedure, or infection, see your

medical professional immediately, call 911, or go to a hospital with an advocate and say, “I am concerned about sepsis.”

## What Causes Sepsis?

Sepsis is caused by an infection. The infection can be viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic. It can be a tiny infection that started in a paper cut or bug bite, or a larger infection, like pneumonia or meningitis. Sometimes, doctors never learn what the infection was.

## How is Sepsis Prevented?

Sepsis can't always be prevented but the risk drops when steps are taken to reduce the risk of infection, such as staying current with vaccinations and practicing good hygiene.

## Critical Facts About Sepsis

- Sepsis is the leading cause of death in hospitals.<sup>1</sup>
- 19% of people hospitalized with sepsis are readmitted within 30 days.<sup>2</sup>
- As many as 87% of sepsis cases start in the community.<sup>3</sup>
- The risk of dying from sepsis increases by 8% every hour treatment is delayed.<sup>4</sup>

- Sepsis affects over 30 million people worldwide each year and is the most common killer of children, more than 3 million each year.<sup>5</sup>
- More than 1.7 million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with sepsis each year, 1 every 20 seconds; the incidence is rising by 8% each year.<sup>6,7</sup>
- 270,000 people die from sepsis each year in the U.S., one every 2 minutes; more than from prostate cancer, breast cancer, and AIDS combined.<sup>8,9</sup>
- More than 75,000 children develop severe sepsis each year in the U.S., and 6,800 die — more than from pediatric cancers.<sup>10</sup>
- Sepsis causes at least 261,000 maternal deaths each year worldwide and is driving increasing pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S.<sup>11,12</sup>
- Every day in the U.S., an average of 38 amputations are required because of sepsis.<sup>13</sup>
- Sepsis survivors have a shortened life expectancy, are more likely to suffer from an impaired quality of life, and are 42% more likely to commit suicide.<sup>14,15</sup>

# SEPSIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

## IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS, CALL 9-1-1 OR GO TO A HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY.

### There Is Also an Economic Cost to Sepsis:

- Sepsis is the #1 cost of hospitalization in the U.S., consuming more than \$27 billion each year.<sup>16</sup>
- The average cost per hospital stay for sepsis is \$18,400, double the average cost per stay across all other conditions.<sup>17</sup>
- Sepsis is the #1 cause for readmissions to the hospital, costing more than \$2 billion each year.<sup>18</sup>
- Despite all this, more than 40% of American adults have NEVER heard of sepsis.<sup>18</sup>

### Sources:

1. <https://tinyurl.com/mcoybz7>
2. <http://tinyurl.com/lrbungv>
3. <http://tinyurl.com/yd6ug7m9>
4. <https://tinyurl.com/88va34g>
5. <http://tinyurl.com/yabpf4cq>
6. <http://tinyurl.com/yabpf4cq>
7. <https://tinyurl.com/9wd837>
8. <http://tinyurl.com/y8doj7wx>
9. <https://tinyurl.com/jy5jv9j>
10. <http://tinyurl.com/yd4yaoul>
11. <http://tinyurl.com/pw66chw>
12. <https://tinyurl.com/lene4or>
13. Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project, Nationwide Inpatient Sample, 2012. Accessed April 6, 2016
14. <https://tinyurl.com/kvzn9o2>
15. <https://tinyurl.com/m2tcg59>
16. <http://tinyurl.com/ybma5xz5>
17. <https://tinyurl.com/khrl74v>
18. <http://tinyurl.com/ybhwbofp>

To learn more about sepsis,  
or to read tributes and survivor stories,  
visit us online at [Sepsis.org](http://Sepsis.org)



## SEPSIS ALLIANCE

**Suspect Sepsis. Save Lives.™**

*Sepsis Information Guides are supported in part by an educational grant from bioMérieux, Inc.*

*The information in this pamphlet is intended for educational purposes only. Sepsis Alliance does not represent or guarantee that this information is applicable to any specific patient's care or treatment. The educational content here does not constitute medical advice from a physician and is not to be used as a substitute for treatment or advice from a practicing physician or other healthcare provider. Sepsis Alliance recommends users consult their physician or healthcare provider regarding any questions about whether the information in this pamphlet might apply to their individual treatment or care.*