

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF RECOVER AT HOME?

- Set small, achievable goals for yourself each week, such as taking a bath, dressing yourself, or walking up the stairs
- Rest and rebuild your strength
- Talk about how you are feeling to family and friends
- Record your thoughts, struggles and milestones in a journal
- Learn about sepsis to understand what happened
- Ask your family to fill in any gaps you may have in your memory about what happened to you
- Eat a balanced diet
- Exercise if you feel up to it
- Make a list of questions to ask your doctor when you go for a checkup

## ARE THERE ANY LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SEPSIS?

Many people who survive sepsis recover completely and their lives return to normal. However, as with some other illnesses requiring intensive medical care, some patients have long-term effects. These problems may not become apparent for several weeks (post-sepsis), and may include such consequences as:

- Insomnia, difficulty getting to or staying asleep
- Nightmares, vivid hallucinations, panic attacks
- Disabling muscle and joint pains
- Decreased mental (cognitive) functioning
- Loss of self-esteem and self-belief
- Organ dysfunction (kidney failure, respiratory problems, etc.)
- Amputations [loss of limb(s)]

## Top ten things everyone should know about Sepsis

# 10

1. Sepsis is a life-threatening condition that arises when the body's response to infection injures its own tissues and organs.
2. Sepsis is a medical emergency. Minutes matter.
3. No one is immune. Sepsis can strike anyone regardless of age, race, color, or creed.
4. Despite more than 1.6 million cases a year, fewer than half of Americans have heard of sepsis.
5. Sepsis kills more people in the US than breast, lung and prostate cancer combined.
6. Sepsis kills more kids in the US than cancer.
7. There is no single sign or symptom of sepsis. Warning signs can include dizziness, shortness of breath, confusion and sleepiness.
8. Delays in antibiotic administration can increase risk of death from sepsis.
9. There is no FDA-approved therapy for sepsis. Immediate treatment with antibiotics and fluids could cut the number of deaths in half.
10. If you are worried about sepsis, tell your health care provider: "I am concerned about sepsis."

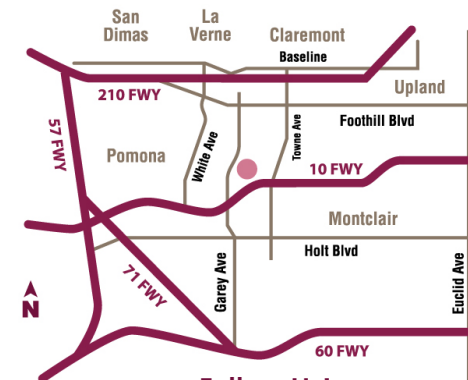
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To learn more about sepsis visit:

[www.SepsisAlliance.org](http://www.SepsisAlliance.org)

[www.cdc.gov/sepsis](http://www.cdc.gov/sepsis)

[www.rorystauntonfoundationforsepsis.org](http://www.rorystauntonfoundationforsepsis.org)



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1798 N. Garey Ave., Pomona, CA 91767

909.865.9846

## Suspect Sepsis Save Lives

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WHAT IS SEPSIS?

Sepsis is a toxic response to infection that kills more than 258,000 Americans each year – more than breast cancer, lung cancer and prostate cancer combined. Sepsis is a medical emergency that requires early detection and treatment for survival.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Sepsis can occur to anyone at any time. Any infection can lead to your body developing sepsis. Sepsis not only kills thousands of people, it leaves many more with amputations of limbs, body organs that don’t work properly, psychological distress, and more.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR SEPSIS?

While anyone can get sepsis, some people are at higher risk. This includes the very young and elderly, patients with certain chronic diseases, such as cancer and liver disease, and people taking medications that affect the infection fighting (immune) system. Ask your doctor if you are at higher risk.

WHAT CAUSES SEPSIS?

Any type of infection can cause sepsis. It can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. An infection anywhere in your body can lead to sepsis, but the most common infections causing sepsis are pneumonia, urinary tract infections and infections in the belly.

CAN SEPSIS BE TREATED?

Yes, sepsis can be treated but it must be suspected first. People with sepsis must receive antibiotics and intravenous fluids (administered through an IV) as quickly as possible. The antibiotics fight the infection while the fluids help to make sure enough blood and oxygen gets to your cells and tissues.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM WORRIED THAT I OR SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT HAS SEPSIS?

Unfortunately, there is no single, defining sign or symptom of sepsis. The most common report from sepsis survivors is that the symptoms they were feeling – fever, chills, pain, shortness of breath – were the worst they had ever felt. Other warning signs to pay particular attention to are dizziness, confusion or being less responsive, or being unable to be awakened. We have all had colds. Sepsis is more severe than a cold.

If you are worried about sepsis and are at home, you should call 9-1-1. Studies suggest early care in an ambulance can make it more likely you or your loved one will survive. Tell health care providers, “I am concerned about sepsis.” This gives them a specific concern to address. Remember that sepsis is also a common complication of people hospitalized for other reasons. So, if you are feeling worse after surgery or a loved one is not continuing to get better, insist that sepsis be considered.


One of the easiest ways to prevent sepsis is by making sure that no one touches you in the hospital unless you see them wash their hands. This is the greatest protection against infections and sepsis in the hospital.

WHY HAVEN’T I HEARD ABOUT SEPSIS?


You aren’t alone. A recent national survey found that less than half of Americans have ever heard of sepsis. Sepsis may occur in patients battling other conditions, such as cancer or a stroke. A lack of awareness of sepsis makes it easier to refer to these deaths as complications of the prior condition rather than from sepsis. Sepsis is also often referred to in the media as “septicemia” or “blood poisoning” – increasing confusion.

HOW CAN I GET AHEAD OF SEPSIS?

1. Talk to your doctor or nurse about steps you can take to **prevent infections**. Some steps include taking good care of chronic conditions and getting recommended vaccines.




Take good care of chronic conditions



Get recommended vaccines

2. **Practice good hygiene**, such as handwashing and keeping cuts clean until healed.



Handwashing



Keep cuts clean until healed

3. **Know the symptoms** of sepsis.

Confusion or disorientation

Shortness of breath

High Heart Rate

Fever, or shivering, or feeling cold

Extreme pain or discomfort

Clammy or sweaty skin

4. **ACT FAST**. Get medical care *immediately* if you suspect sepsis or have an infection that’s not getting better or is getting worse.

Always remember, sepsis is a medical emergency. *Time matters.*

LIFE AFTER SEPSIS

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS IN RECOVERY?

After you have had sepsis, rehabilitation usually starts in the hospital by slowly helping you to move around and look after yourself: bathing, sitting up, standing, walking, taking yourself to the restroom, etc. The purpose of rehabilitation is to restore you back to your previous level of health or as close to it as possible. Begin your rehabilitation by building up your activities slowly, and rest when you are tired.

HOW WILL I FEEL WHEN I GET HOME?

You have been seriously ill, and your body and mind need time to get better. You may experience the following physical symptoms upon returning home:

- General to extreme weakness and fatigue
- Breathlessness
- General body pains or aches
- Difficulty moving around
- Difficulty sleeping
- Weight loss, lack of appetite, food not tasting normal
- Dry and itchy skin that may peel
- Brittle nails
- Hair loss

It is also not unusual to have the following feelings once you’re at home:

- Unsure of yourself
- Not caring about your appearance
- Wanting to be alone, avoiding friends and family
- Flashbacks, bad memories
- Confusing reality (e.g., not sure what is real and what isn’t)
- Feeling anxious, more worried than usual
- Poor concentration
- Depressed, angry, unmotivated
- Frustration at not being able to do everyday tasks