

**NSW Health**

# **About sepsis**

**Easy Read version**

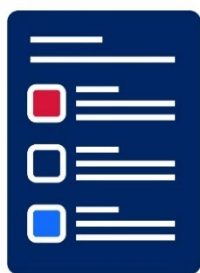


# How to use this document



We are NSW Health.

We wrote this document.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page [26](#).



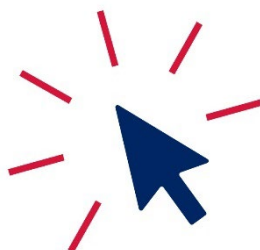
You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this document
- find more information.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

It only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/factsheets/  
pages/sepsis.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/factsheets/pages/sepsis.aspx)

# What is in this document?

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# What is sepsis?



Sepsis is a medical condition that is serious.

It can end your life.

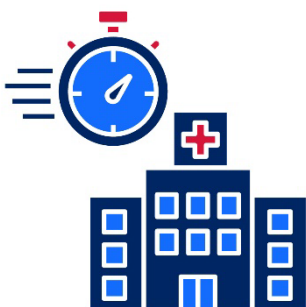


Sepsis is when your body reacts really badly to an **infection**.



When you have an infection, it means germs have gotten into your body.

This can make you very sick.



If you have sepsis you need to go to hospital as soon as you can.



Sepsis can damage parts of your body for the rest of your life if you wait too long.

A doctor can:



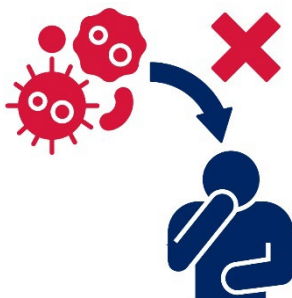
- check if you have an infection



- tell you if you have sepsis.



You need to see your doctor if you think you have an infection.



This can help make sure an infection doesn't lead to sepsis.

# Who is most at risk of sepsis?



Anyone can get sepsis.



But some people are more likely to get sepsis.

This includes:



- babies 3 months and younger



- children 5 years old and younger.

People who are more likely to get sepsis also can include:



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



- people who are pregnant or just gave birth

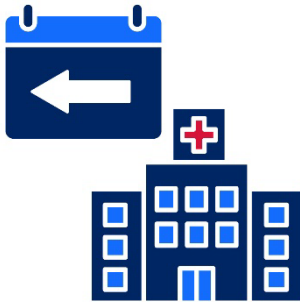


- people 65 years and older.

Sepsis is also more likely to affect people who:



- have had sepsis before



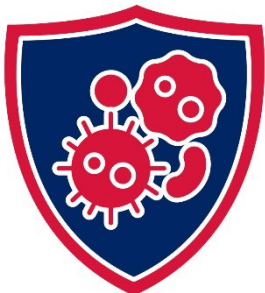
- have been in hospital not long ago with a serious illness



- have an illness that will last a long time and might not go away



- don't have a good **immune system**.



Your immune system is how your body protects you from germs and keeps you healthy.



# What are the symptoms of sepsis?

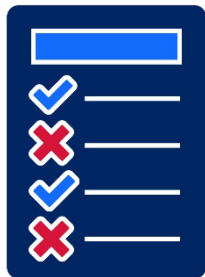


Some **symptoms** of sepsis are serious.

Serious symptoms can end your life.



Symptoms are signs that you might be sick.



You don't need to have all the symptoms listed to have sepsis.

If you or your child have any serious symptoms, you should:



- go to hospital right away



- call Triple Zero (000) right away and ask for an ambulance.

000

## Adults and older children

### Serious symptoms

Serious symptoms of sepsis in adults and older children can include:



- feeling more sick than ever before



- getting very sick quickly



- trouble breathing or breathing very quickly



- feeling confused.

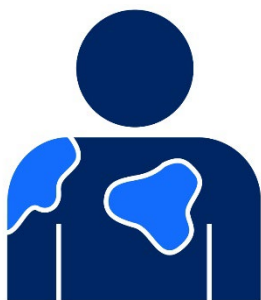
Serious symptoms for adults and older children also include:



- not needing to pee all day

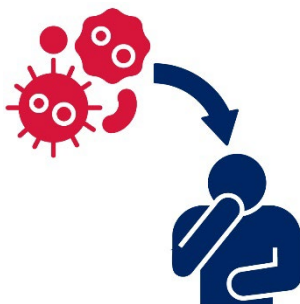


- a new rash that doesn't fade when you press it



- blue, blotchy or pale skin.

## Symptoms of infection



Infections can lead to sepsis.

You can find out what to do on page [19](#).

Symptoms of infection in adults and older children can include:



- fever or shivering



- feeling very tired



- headaches

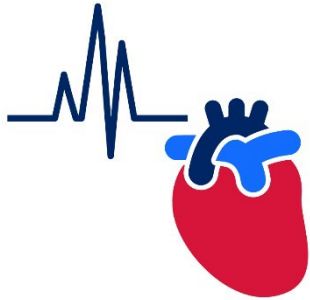


- pain in your joints and muscles



- swelling or pain around a cut.

Symptoms of infection in adults and older children can also include:



- fast heartbeat or pulse



- throwing up vomit



- **diarrhoea.**



Diarrhoea is when you have to go to the bathroom a lot because your poo is watery and loose.

## Young children and babies



You know your child best.

Call Triple Zero if it seems like something is very wrong.

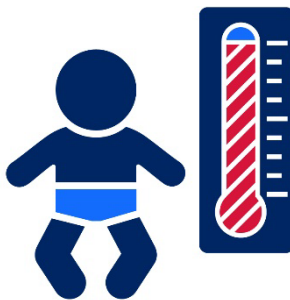
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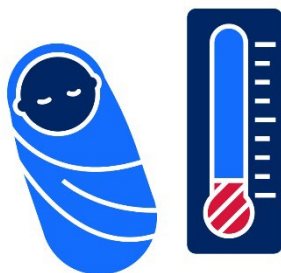
Or you should go to hospital right away if something seems very wrong.

## Serious symptoms

Serious symptoms of sepsis in young children and babies can include:



- fever in a child less than 3 months old



- low temperature or cold skin in babies less than 1 month old.

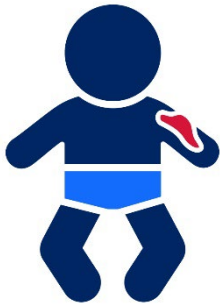
Serious symptoms for young children and babies can also include:



- getting very sick quickly



- less pee than usual or no pee all day



- a new rash that doesn't fade when you press it



- being upset or hard to comfort



- being quieter or harder to wake up.

Serious symptoms for young people and babies can also include:



- feeling floppy when you pick them up



- crying in a weak or high-pitched way



- blue, blotchy or pale skin



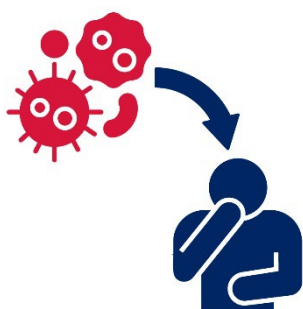
- having trouble breathing or breathing very quickly



- moving or shaking in a strange way – like a seizure.



## Symptoms of infection



Infections can lead to sepsis.

You can find out what to do on page [19](#).

Symptoms of infection in young children and babies can include:



- fevers in children older than 3 months



- diarrhoea or throwing up vomit



- behaving in a way that is not usual – like not eating



- swelling or pain around a cut.

## Pregnant people and people who just gave birth



The symptoms of sepsis for adults can also affect:

- pregnant people
- people who just gave birth.



But these people can have other symptoms too.

### Serious symptoms

Other serious symptoms for pregnant people and people who just gave birth can include:



- pain in the area around your stomach



- bleeding from your vagina you didn't expect



- fluid coming out of your vagina that looks or smells different.

# What to do if you think you have sepsis?



Infections can lead to sepsis.

You should call your doctor if you or your child have symptoms of infection.



You can also call healthdirect.

healthdirect is a 24-hour helpline.

1800 022 222



You know you and your child best.



You should call Triple Zero if it seems like something is very wrong.

000



Or you can go to a hospital right away.

# How can you protect yourself?



You can keep yourself safe from sepsis by protecting yourself from infections.

You should:



- wash your hands with soap



- cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough



- cover your cuts and keep them clean until they heal.



You shouldn't share personal items with other people.

For example, razors or toothbrushes.



You should make sure you talk to your doctor often if you have a health condition that puts you at risk of infections.



It's important to listen and do what your doctor says.

For example, take medicines that they give you.



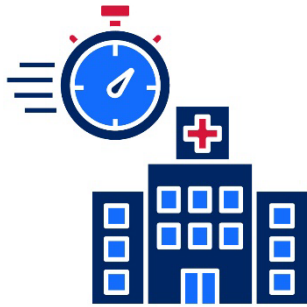
You should also get **vaccines** when you need them.

A vaccine is medicine that:



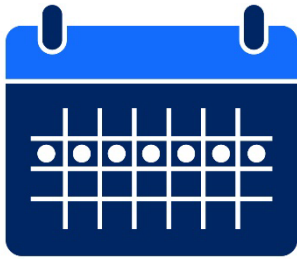
- helps you fight a virus if you come into contact with it
- can stop you getting very sick from the virus.

# How can you get better from sepsis?



You will need to go to hospital to get better from sepsis.

You should do this as soon as possible.



You might need to stay in the hospital for a few days or weeks.



You might need **antibiotics**.

Antibiotics is a type of medicine that helps treat infections.

You might need support to:



- get fluids into your body



- breathe.



You might also need surgery.

# What can happen to you after sepsis?



Sepsis can keep affecting your health even after you get better.

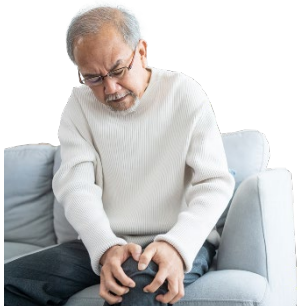
This might include:



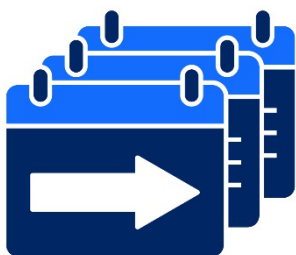
- trouble sleeping and bad dreams



- trouble trying to focus



- muscle and joint pain that can stop you from moving.



This can last for 6 to 18 months.

But it can also last longer.



## More information



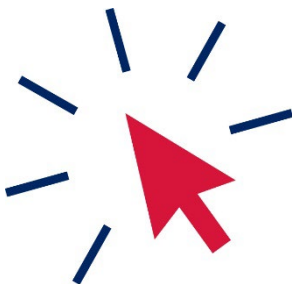
You can call your doctor if you:

- think you have sepsis
- have health questions
- don't need an ambulance.



You can call healthdirect.

1800 022 222



You can find out more about sepsis on our website.

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/sepsis/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/sepsis/Pages/default.aspx)

# Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



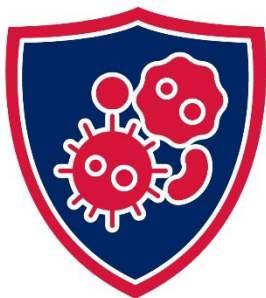
## **Antibiotics**

Antibiotics is a type of medicine that helps treat infections.



## **Diarrhoea**

Diarrhoea is when you have to go to the bathroom a lot because your poo is watery and loose.



## **Immune system**

Your immune system is how your body protects you from germs and keeps you healthy.



## Infection

When you have an infection, it means germs have gotten into your body.

This can make you very sick.



## Symptoms

Symptoms are signs that you might be sick.



## Vaccine

A vaccine is medicine that:

- helps you fight a virus if you come into contact with it
- can stop you getting very sick from the virus.



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