

# Understanding Sepsis

## What is sepsis?

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. Sepsis can result from an infection anywhere in the body, from a scratch gotten during sports to influenza, COVID-19, urinary tract infections, toxic shock syndrome or meningitis.

**SEPSIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.**

## How does sepsis affect teens?

Each year there are more than 75,000 cases of severe pediatric sepsis in the United States. Nearly 7,000 of these children will die. Children, including teens, who survive often have life long impacts, such as amputations, organ dysfunction, mental health concerns and cognitive issues. Teens with underlying chronic disease are at increased risk in developing sepsis.

## Early detection can save lives.

Seek immediate medical care if you suspect someone has an infection that is not improving or is getting worse. Sepsis signs and symptoms include any of the following:

- Fever or low temperature
- Fast heart rate and rapid breathing
- Rash that does not fade at touch
- Cold hands and feet
- Clammy or pale skin
- Confusion, dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Extreme pain or discomfort
- Nausea and vomiting
- Convulsions

Just ask

# Could it be sepsis?



QUALITY  
& SAFETY



To learn more about pediatric sepsis, visit the health library on [CHKD.org](https://www.chkd.org).