

Have an infection?

Know your risk of sepsis

What is sepsis?

Sepsis happens when the body has an extreme response to an infection. Sepsis can damage many parts of the body like your heart and lungs and can result in death.

Sepsis is a medical emergency. The best chance of getting better from sepsis is to treat it quickly.

Symptoms of sepsis



Fast breathing or breathlessness



Fever and chills



Fast heartbeat



Low body temperature



Diarrhoea



Low or no urine output



Nausea and vomiting



New fatigue, confusion, drowsiness or change in behaviour



Pain or 'feeling worse than ever'

What do I need to look out for?

Any infection can lead to sepsis. Most infections get better on their own, but you need to know what to do if signs quickly get worse.

When you have sepsis, you may feel very sick – worse than ever, in a way that is different to a normal illness.

What should I do if I am worried?

If you think you or a loved one may have sepsis, trust your gut, call Triple Zero (000) or go straight to hospital and ask a doctor or nurse, 'Could it be sepsis?'

It's ok to go back, even if you have already been to the doctor.



**If you are unsure, call
13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)**

anytime for free, confidential advice from a registered nurse.



Queensland
Government

Who can get sepsis?

Sepsis can affect anyone, even young and healthy people. Some people are more likely to get sepsis than others. You may be at increased risk if you:

- are over 65 years of age
- have a weakened immune system
- recently had surgery
- are pregnant or have just given birth
- are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- are being treated for cancer
- have complex health conditions
- have burns, cuts, and injuries
- have COVID-19
- have already had sepsis
- are a child younger than 1 year.

Would you know when to ask — ‘Could it be sepsis?’



Watch this 1-minute video to learn more about sepsis.

How to prevent sepsis?

The best way to prevent sepsis is to avoid an infection. You can do this by:



talking to your doctor if you are unwell



staying up to date with vaccinations



keeping cuts clean and covered as they heal



washing your hands often



being aware of the signs of infection and sepsis.

Acknowledgement

Adapted from the Australian Sepsis Network, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases.

Disclaimer

This information sheet is meant solely for educational purposes and is not intended to act as a substitute for advice provided by medical professionals. This information sheet is being trialled. To provide feedback please email sepsis@health.qld.gov.au.