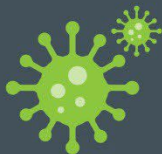


# SEPSIS IN CHILDREN: A Guide for Families

What to look for and when to seek help



Sepsis is a serious, life-threatening condition. Any infection can lead to sepsis. More than 75,000 U.S. children get severe sepsis every year.



Parents know their child best, so they know what's normal for their child. When parents speak up about their concerns, they help healthcare staff figure out if their child has sepsis.



Washing hands, keeping wounds clean and getting recommended vaccines can help prevent sepsis.

## Risk of Sepsis

Sepsis can happen to any child, but is more likely to happen to children who:

- have an infection or open wound
- are in the hospital
- had recent surgery
- have a weakened immune system

**“SEPSIS IN CHILDREN** needs quick action and families are often the first to notice their child doesn't seem right. The early symptoms may not look like an emergency, but if the family is concerned, they should trust that feeling and call right away. It is never a bother.”

—Matthew Niedner, MD

## Signs of Sepsis

Sepsis can be difficult to recognize because it can present in many different ways. Symptoms can look like other common illnesses and may include:

- Fever of 101.5 or higher
- Low blood pressure
- Fast heart rate
- Short of breath or troubled breathing
- Irritable or confused
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Less interest in playing or feeding
- Getting sicker fast

## Get Help Quickly

Early diagnosis and treatment is critical. Every hour can matter.

**ACT** if you're concerned that your child might have sepsis.

**Act** immediately by contacting your child's health care team.

**Communicate** using specific words like “I am concerned this may be sepsis” to alert your child's medical team.

**Trust** your gut. Families who have a child with sepsis often say “they knew something was not right.”

The Improving Pediatric Sepsis Outcomes Collaborative (IPSO) was an effort supported by The Children's Hospital Association to save children's lives through better prevention, detection and treatment of Sepsis. This handout was co-designed by doctors, nurses and families to support you in providing the best care for your child. *Used with permission of Children's Hospital Association.*