

SEPSIS AND CHILDREN

What is sepsis?

Sepsis is the body's response to infection. It can cause damage to its own tissue and organs. It needs to be treated as quickly as possible

What causes sepsis?

Most common cause:

- Bacterial infections

Other causes:

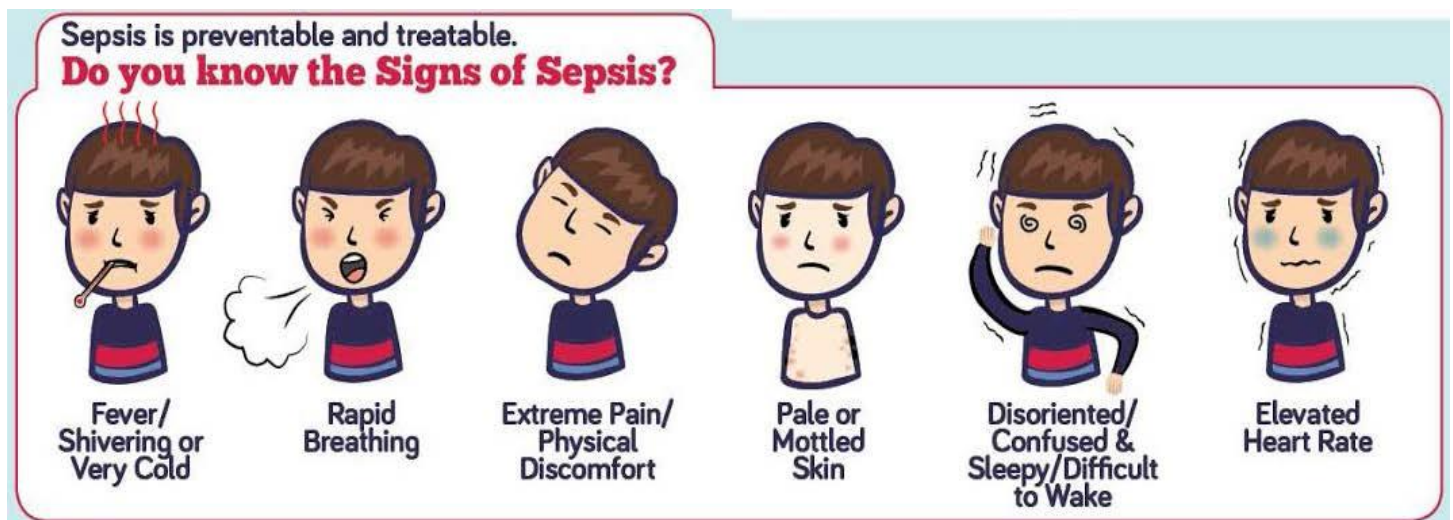
- Virus, fungus, or parasite

Common sites of infection that can cause sepsis are:

- **The blood** - Bacteria, viruses, and parasites can get into the bloodstream
- **The stomach** - Infection of the appendix (appendicitis), bowel, stomach cavity (peritonitis), gallbladder, or liver
- **The central nervous system** - Infection of the brain or the spinal cord
- **The lungs** - Infections such as pneumonia
- **The skin** - Bacteria can enter the body through open skin, including openings made with intravenous (IV) catheters. Other skin infections (cellulitis) can also cause sepsis.
- **The urinary tract** - Infection of the kidney or bladder may lead to sepsis

What are the signs and symptoms?

Many of the signs of sepsis can be attributed to other medical conditions. There are some common signs that may occur together to give us clues. Below is a graphic that summarizes the most common symptoms:



As a family member you are an important part of your child's health care team. If you ever have concerns about your child, please ask us!

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How is sepsis treated?

All sepsis is treated the same until the results of the blood tests return.

- An IV will be started for fluids and antibiotics. These will continue until the results of the blood tests are final.
- **Bacterial sepsis** is treated by intravenous (IV) antibiotics for 7 to 21 days.
- If the blood tests do not show bacteria, your child may have a virus.
 - Antibiotics do not kill viruses so they won't be given to your child.
- Pain medicine (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may be given for comfort, or to treat fever.
- IV fluids may be continued for hydration.
- A monitor may be used to help watch your child for any changes.

References:

<http://www.myicucare.org/Adult-Support/Pages/Sepsis.aspx>

<https://rorystauntonfoundationforsepsis.org/>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sepsis.html>

*Information adapted with permission from CHOP and DuPont