

Sepsis and Kids

What is sepsis?

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. Any infection can lead to sepsis.

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

- Infection or open wound
- Recent surgery
- Weakened immune system

When should I think about sepsis?

Sepsis can look like other common illnesses. Signs of possible sepsis are:

- Fever of 101°F or higher
- Changes in skin color (blotchy, blue, pale, darker or grey appearance of lips, gums, tongue or nailbeds)
- Fast heartbeat
- Weakness, fainting, cannot walk
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Confusion or difficulty waking up
- Not acting normal
- Not peeing enough
- Seizures (activity from the brain that causes uncontrollable shaking, collapse, or staring into space)

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

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

- Act right away by contacting your health care team
- Communicate using specific words like "I am worried this may be sepsis"