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Symptoms

Sepsis

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Sepsis is a life-threatening complication of an infection.

Most cases lead to a full recovery if it's identified and treated quickly. But without quick treatment, sepsis can lead to multiple organ failure and death.

It can be hard to tell if you have sepsis but trust your instincts.

If you or someone you look after has symptoms of sepsis or is very unwell, call 999 or 112, or go to an [emergency department \(ED\)](#).

Call 999 or 112 or go to an ED if a baby or child under 5:

- has blue, pale or blotchy skin, lips or tongue
- has a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it, [in the same way you check for meningitis](#)
- is being very sluggish, unusually sleepy and hard to wake
- feels unusually cold to touch
- has had no pee or wet nappies for more than 12 hours
- is breathing very fast
- has fits or convulsions
- has a weak, high-pitched cry that's not like their normal cry
- has an infection, is still unwell after 24 hours or is getting worse - it may be sepsis

They may not have all these symptoms. Even if they have just 1, get urgent medical help.

Call 999 or 112 or go to an ED if an adult or older child has had an infection and:

- is acting confused, slurring their speech, not making sense or not their usual self
- has difficulty breathing, breathlessness or is breathing very fast
- their lips are blue or slightly blue
- pounding in their chest
- has hands and feet that feel cold, clammy and look pale
- feels dizzy, faint or loses consciousness (passes out)
- is not peeing as much as normal - for example, not peeing for a day
- has a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it, [in the same way you check for meningitis](#)
- has severe muscle pain
- is complaining of severe leg pain or difficulty standing
- has an infection, is still unwell after 24 hours or is getting worse - it may be sepsis

They may not have all these symptoms. Even if they have just 1, get urgent medical help.

Signs and symptoms of sepsis

It's not always easy to tell if you are developing sepsis. There are lots of possible symptoms. Symptoms can be vague. They can be like symptoms of other conditions, including flu or a chest infection.

Sepsis cannot develop unless you have an [infection](#).

Early signs of sepsis in babies and children under 5

Contact your GP or your GP out-of-hours urgently if

your baby or child has an infection and has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher in babies under 3 months
- a temperature of 39 degrees Celsius or higher in babies aged 3 to 6 months

- a temperature below 36 degrees Celsius - check again after 5 minutes to confirm
- difficulty breathing, breathlessness or you notice their stomach moving in and out as they use their stomach muscles to help them breathe
- no interest in feeding (in babies)
- not drank anything for more than 8 hours when awake
- been vomiting repeatedly
- blood in their vomit or their vomit is green or black
- sunken eyes
- a bulging soft spot on their head
- no interest in anything, even with encouragement
- been less responsive, irritable or difficult to console
- a stiff neck, especially when trying to look up and down
- been behaving differently than usual to the point that you are worried

If your GP thinks it's sepsis, they will usually refer your baby or child to hospital for further diagnosis and treatment.

 [Find a GP](#)

 [Find a GP out-of-hours](#)

Early signs of sepsis in adults and older children

Sepsis cannot develop unless you have an [infection](#).

Contact a GP or GP out-of-hours urgently if

you or someone you care for has an infection and has:

- a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or above)
- low body temperature (below 36 degrees Celsius)
- chills and shivering
- a fast heartbeat
- problems with or changes to your breathing
- feeling or acting differently from normal
- vomiting
- a headache
- feeling unwell

Some of the symptoms of sepsis are similar to [meningitis](#).

If your GP thinks it's sepsis, they will usually refer you to hospital for further diagnosis and

treatment.

 [Find a GP](#)

 [Find a GP out-of-hours](#)

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