

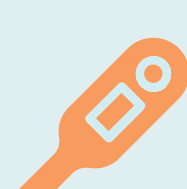
# Know the signs of sepsis



When your body sustains an infection, your immune system steps up to fight it. However, sometimes your body stops fighting the infection, and begins to turn on itself. This response is called sepsis, and it can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death.

## Major warning signs

Early signs of sepsis can be an indication of a variety of conditions, making it tougher to diagnose quickly. Warning signs include:



Fever



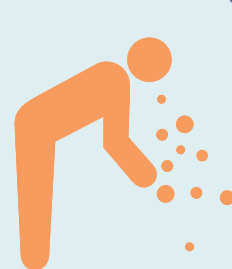
Chills



Fatigue



Shortness of breath



Vomiting



Abdominal pain

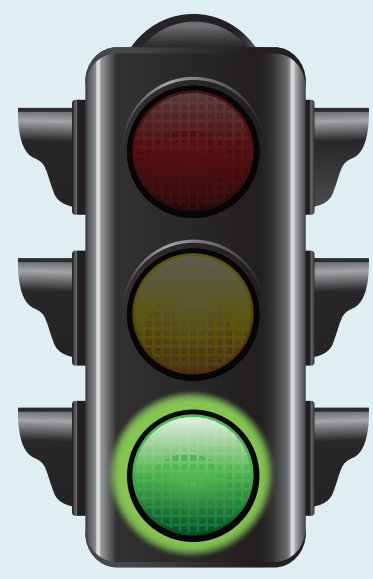


Confusion

## When to take action

While you should always consult a doctor if you suspect sepsis, you can use this color chart to help you identify your risk.\*

### Green Zone: No signs of infection

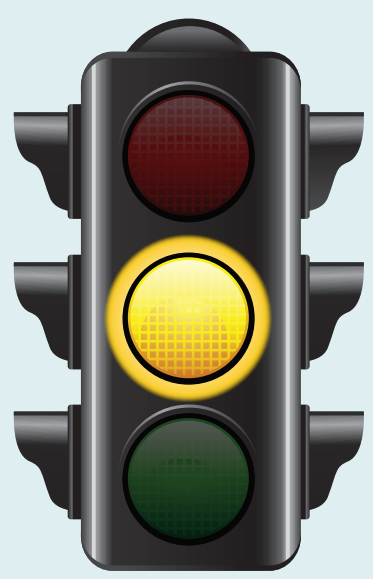


- My heartbeat and breathing feel normal for me
- I don't have chills or feel cold
- My energy level is normal
- I can think clearly
- Any wound or IV site I have is healing well

#### I should:

- Watch for signs of infection
- Continue to take my medicine as ordered, especially if I'm recovering from an infection or illness
- Keep my doctor's appointments
- Follow instructions if I'm caring for a wound or IV site
- Wash my hands and avoid anyone who is ill

### Yellow Zone: Caution

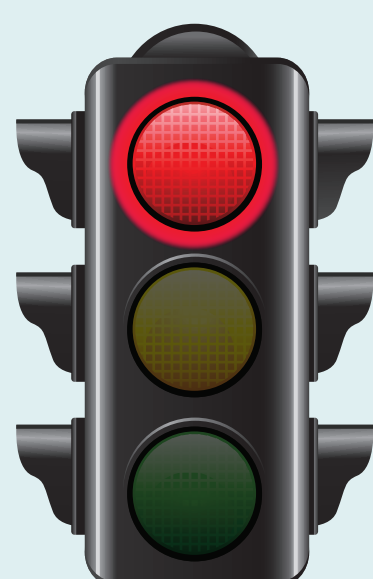


- My heartbeat feels faster than usual
- My breathing is fast or I'm coughing
- I have a fever between 100° F and 101.4° F
- I feel cold and am shivering — I can't get warm
- My thinking is slow — my head is "fuzzy"
- I don't feel well — I'm too tired to do things
- I haven't urinated in five hours, or it's painful or burning when I do
- Any wound or IV site I have looks different

#### I should:

- Contact my doctor, especially if I've recently been ill or had surgery
- Ask my doctor if I might have an infection or sepsis

### Red Zone: Medical alert



- I feel sick, very tired, weak and achy
- My heartbeat or breathing is very fast
- My temperature is 101.5° F or above
- My temperature is below 96.8° F
- My fingernails are pale or blue
- People say I'm not making sense
- My wound or IV site is painful, red, smells or has pus

#### I must:

- Act fast, sepsis is dangerous!
- Call 911 and say, "I need to be evaluated immediately. I'm concerned about sepsis."

\* Source: Health Services Advisory Group

## Who's at risk?

**Sepsis can happen to anyone, but those most at risk include:**

- Children
- Elderly adults
- People with weakened immune systems
- Patients with IV catheters or breathing tubes
- Those without access to regular medical care

### From the expert

"Vital signs are just that — vital. Being aware of what is happening with your heart rate and breathing, and contacting a medical professional at the first signs of concern could make all the difference."

— Dr. Timothy Watt, an emergency medicine doctor affiliated with Sharp Memorial Hospital

