

# SEPSIS

## What You Need to Know as a Patient

### What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is life-threatening and, without timely treatment, can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure and, possibly, death.

### Who is at Risk of Developing Sepsis?

Anyone can get an infection. Any infection can lead to sepsis.

**1** Anyone with a weak immune system

**2** Anyone with chronic illness

**3** Adults who are 65 years of age and older

**4** Anyone who receives treatments that involve insertion of medical objects into the body like urinary catheters, indwelling vascular lines and implanted devices

### What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Sepsis?

#### Think S.E.P.S.I.S.

**S**

#### SHIVERING

You might have chills, fever, clammy skin and feel like you have the flu.

**E**

#### ELEVATED HEART RATE

It might feel like your heart is racing.

**P**

#### PAIN

You might feel new or different pain or discomfort.

**S**

#### SLEEPY

You may feel confused, disoriented or like you have less energy than usual.

**I**

#### "I FEEL WORSE THAN EVER"

You might be sick and worried that you are not getting better.

**S**

#### SHORT OF BREATH

You might feel out of breath or have trouble breathing.

### What Are Treatments for Sepsis?

Sepsis is an emergency and needs to be treated right away. If you have any symptoms and an infection that is not getting better or is getting worse, speak to a health care professional right away, or ask your doctor or nurse, "Could this be Sepsis?"

**Sepsis can get worse over time, so it is best to act early.**

### How Can You Prevent Sepsis?

#### Hand hygiene

Wash your hands thoroughly by using soap and water, or alcohol-based hand rubs. Common infections are spread by hands.

#### Oral hygiene and perineal care

Prevent infection of lungs and bladder by having good oral health and personal hygiene.

#### Managing chronic illness, and taking good care of wounds and indwelling devices.

Remember to take prescription medication as ordered, clean wounds as needed using clean technique, and take care of indwelling devices.

#### Standard and up-to-date vaccinations

Make sure you receive all the vaccinations that are recommended for you.

