



# Sepsis Tip Sheet

## What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition in which the body is fighting a severe infection that has spread via the bloodstream. The infection can commonly be due to *Staphylococcus aureus*, *E. Coli*, and some types of *Streptococcus*. If a patient becomes septic they will likely have low blood pressure leading to poor circulation and lack of blood perfusion of vital tissues and organs. This condition is termed shock and is sometimes referred to as septic shock when an infection is the cause. This condition can develop either because of a result of the body's own defense system or from toxic substances made by the infecting agent. Survival rates for sepsis depend on the patient's underlying medical conditions, how quickly the diagnosis is made, and treatment begins, the organism that causes the infection, and the patient's age. People who are at high risk for sepsis are children, infants, elderly individuals over 65, and people with serious medical conditions/weakened immune systems.



## What are the Common Infection Sites of Sepsis?

- Lungs/pneumonia
- Kidney/urinary tract infection
- Skin
- GI/abdomen

## How Can I Get Ahead of Sepsis?

- Know your facility's policy and procedures for managing sepsis
- Educate your staff members, residents, and families about sepsis
- Care staff members complete simulation training for early recognition to improve critical thinking
- Know sepsis signs and symptoms
- Standardize a screening tool
- Follow infection control practices
- INTERACT<sup>®</sup> program which provides educational and clinical tools to detect early acute changes in long-term care residents
- Stop and Watch Early Warning Tool for identifying a potential change in a resident's condition
- Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation (SBAR) tool and communication tool to the Physician/physician assistant (PA)/certified nurse practitioner (CNP), that guides the nurse when a change in condition is identified
- Daily staff member communication meetings to identify high-risk factors (huddles)

## What are the Signs and Symptoms of Sepsis?

- Confusion or disorientation
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid breathing and heart rate
- Fever, shivering, chills
- Abdominal pain/discomfort
- Nausea
- Clammy or sweaty skin
- Decreased urination
- Rash

## What Should I do If I Suspect Sepsis?

- Immediately contact the physician/PA/CNP
- Consider transfer based on resident presentation and availability of resources and code status
- If indicated, initiate immediate treatment as directed by the physician/PA/CNP
  - Broad spectrum antibiotics, intravenous fluids and medication, oxygen, invasive or non-invasive mechanical ventilation, dialysis, vasopressors, surgical drainage of infected fluid collections, parenteral nutrition—for prolonged illness)
- Check, monitor, and document resident's progress frequently

### Resources

- <https://cdc.gov/sepsis>
- <http://www.mnhospitals.org/quality-patient-safety/quality-patient-safety-initiatives/sepsis-and-septic-shock#/videos/list>
- <http://www.pathway-interact.com/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23353941>
- <http://www.mnhospitals.org/quality-patient-safety/quality-patient-safety-initiatives/sepsis-and-septic-shock#/videos/list>