

Sepsis

Factsheet for adult patients and families

About sepsis

- Sepsis is a life-threatening illness needing immediate treatment.
- It happens when the body's response to fighting an infection damages healthy tissues and organs.
- Without fast treatment, sepsis can cause organ failure and even death.
- Every year, at least 18,000 Australians are diagnosed with sepsis, with around 5,000 people losing their lives¹.

Sepsis is a medical emergency where time matters. Early recognition and treatment saves lives. Read on to learn about the symptoms of sepsis and when to seek help.

What causes sepsis?

When germs enter a person's body, they can cause an infection. Sometimes that infection turns into sepsis. Many different types of germs can cause sepsis including bacteria, fungi and viruses. However, sepsis occurs most often in response to bacterial infections of the lungs, urinary tract, abdominal organs or skin and soft tissues.

Who is at risk of sepsis?

Sepsis can affect anyone with an infection - it doesn't matter what type of infection you have. Some people are more at risk than others. This includes people who:

- are very old or very young
- have a weakened immune system or are being treated for cancer
- have just had surgery or given birth
- have a wound or injury.

What can I do to prevent sepsis?

Avoiding infections can reduce the risk of getting sepsis. You should:

- practice good hygiene and hand washing
- follow advice from medical professionals about vaccinations and how to take care of any infections
- keep wounds or cuts clean until fully healed.

¹The George Institute for Global Health (2017)
'Stopping sepsis: A National Action Plan'

Could
this
be
sepsis



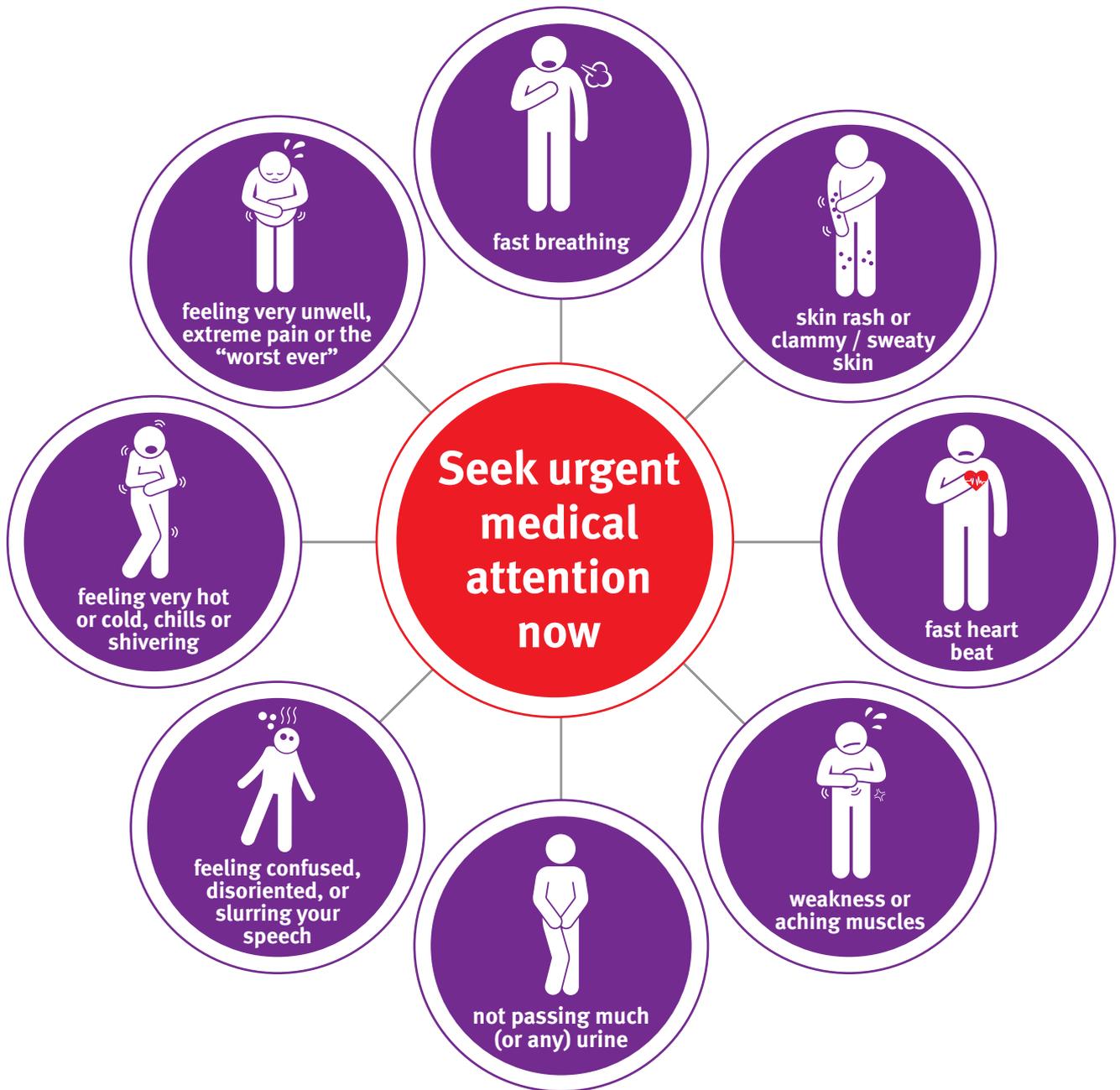

**Tick tock
you're on the clock!**



**Queensland
Government**

What are the symptoms of sepsis?

There is no single symptom of sepsis. Sepsis can initially look like the flu, gastro or a normal urinary, skin or chest infection. If you have an infection, signs you may have developed sepsis can include one or more of the following things:



What should I do if I am concerned?

If you are feeling worse or more unwell than you have ever felt before, go to the closest hospital Emergency Department straight away. Ask your doctor or nurse: ***Could this be sepsis?***

If you are unsure, call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) anytime for free, confidential advice from a registered nurse.

Acknowledgement

Adapted from the Australian Sepsis Network, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases.

Disclaimer

This information sheet is meant solely for educational purposes and is not intended to act as a substitute for advice provided by medical professionals. For more information phone 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84). This information sheet is being trialled. To provide feedback please email sepsis@health.qld.gov.au.