



# You Can Help Stop Germs From Making You Sick

This text guide was created to help children understand how to avoid infections.

### What is sepsis?

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to an infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

More than 75,000 children develop severe sepsis in the U.S. each year. Almost 7,000 of these children die.

Sepsis can happen as the result of any infection. There is no one symptom of sepsis. If your child is unwell with either a fever or very low temperature (or has had a fever in the last 24 hours): *SUSPECT SEPSIS.*

**TIME IS VERY CRITICAL**

Signs and symptoms to watch for:

**Any child who:**

1. Feels abnormally cold to touch
2. Looks mottled, bluish, or has very pale skin
3. Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
4. Is breathing very fast
5. Has a convulsion
6. Is very lethargic or difficult to wake up

**Any child under 5 who:**

1. Is not eating
2. Is vomiting repeatedly
3. Has not urinated in 12 hours

If you see one or more of these symptoms, your child may be critically ill.

**SEE A DOCTOR URGENTLY OR CALL 9-1-1 AND SAY "I'M CONCERNED ABOUT SEPSIS"**

For the Child

Hi, I'm Bug.

I'm here to help you learn about germs and how to keep bad germs from making you sick.



Like dust, good and bad germs are everywhere. But germs are so small you can't see them. Bad germs can cause an infection (in-FEK-shun) and make you sick. If you get an infection that doesn't get better, you may get sepsis (SEP-sis). Sepsis can make you very sick.

Bad germs can get into your body through your nose, eyes, or mouth. They can also get in if you hurt your skin by getting a cut, scrape, bug bite, or burn.



There are many things you can do to try to keep bad germs from making you sick.

Wash your hands even if they don't look dirty.

You can wash your hands.



Wash them:

- After using the bathroom
- Before touching your face
- After sneezing, blowing your nose, or coughing in your hand
- Before and after touching food (eating, cooking)
- Before and after touching a cut, scrape, zit, bug bite, or burn
- When you get home after visiting someone, being at school, or just being outside
- Whenever your hands look or feel dirty
- After touching an animal or its toys
- After being with someone who is sick

*If you aren't near a sink, you can use a special cleaner called hand sanitizer (SAN-it-eye-zer). Put some on your hand and rub your hands like you're washing them with soap and water.*

Stay away from people who are sick.



If someone is coughing or sneezing because they are sick, don't stand close to them. You can wear a mask too.



Get your vaccinations  
to help you stay healthy.



Vaccinations (vax-in-A-shuns) are medicines that keep some bad germs away. You might get some vaccines just once. But you might need others more often.



Don't pick at cuts.



Don't pick at scabs, cuts, scrapes, burns, blisters, or zits. Keep them clean and leave them alone.

And tell someone if something hurts or doesn't feel right, like if:

- A cut hurts more than before or has something coming out, like pus
- Skin is warm, darker, or redder around a cut or wound
- Coughing that won't stop or hurts
- You have a very sore throat
- You have pain in your belly or somewhere else, like a toothache
- You have to go to the bathroom a lot, more than before
- It hurts when you go to the bathroom, or you have to go and can't
- It smells funny when you go to the bathroom

*If you have an infection:*



Sometimes you can still get sick and might have to take medicine. The medicine fights bad germs. The most common one is called an antibiotic (an-TIE-by-o-tic), but there are others too. The medicine might be a pill or something you have to drink.

- It's important you take the medicine for as long as the doctor or nurse says to, even if you feel better.
- If you still feel sick while taking the medicine, tell someone.
- If you are very sick, you might need more help.
- If you can't say where something hurts, point to it."



## *In the hospital:*

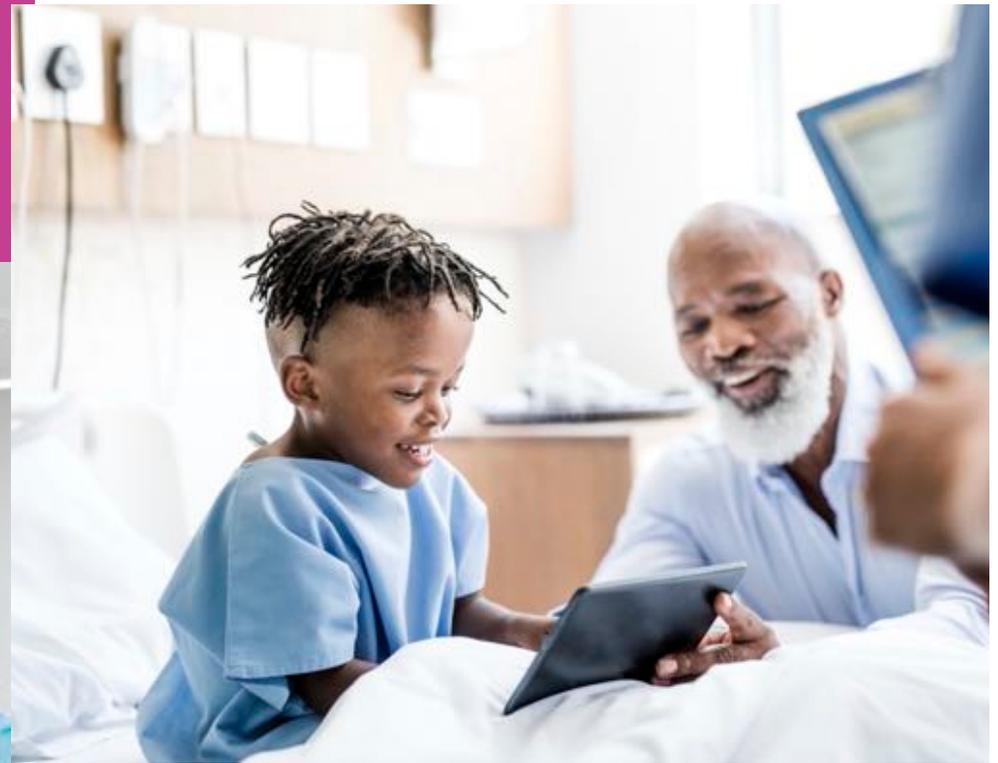
There are a lot of people and machines in the hospital. Doctors, nurses, and other people will come in and out of your room.

You might have to take medicines. People might do things like change bandages, bring food, and help you walk or move.



You might also have an intravenous (in-tra-VEE-nus) line. This is called an IV or short. This is a special tube that gives medicines or fluids. A nurse puts one end of the IV on your hand or arm. The other end of the tube goes to a plastic bag with the fluid or medicine in it.

If you get sicker, you might be moved to a special place called an intensive care unit (ICU). It is a busy place. It can be noisy and bright.



There are lots of machines and people to take care of you. Sometimes they will wake you up to give medicines or ask questions. When you are not so sick anymore, you can go back to a regular hospital room.



Ready to go home?

When it is time to go home, you might still feel sick or tired so you have to rest and take care of yourself. You might have exercises to do to get stronger. It can be hard sometimes, but you still have to try to get better.



If you start to feel sicker again, you have to tell someone you trust.



You know your body best. You are part of a team that works to make you better.

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This team includes doctors, nurses, and others like your parents, a guardian, a babysitter, a therapist who can help you move or breathe better. If you have an infection or sepsis, you can tell others how you feel and what helps you feel better – and what doesn't.



This educational resource is supported by a grant from the Del E. Webb Foundation.

Sepsis Alliance gratefully acknowledges Jefferson Health Center for Autism and Neurodiversity, and Special Olympics Health Messengers for their support reviewing this content.

Bug illustrations provided by Alyssia Aguilar in loving memory of Mark Anthony II.

Learn more at [Sepsis.org](https://www.sepsis.org).

