

Sepsis is triggered by an infection, the primary goal of prevention is to stop infections before they start.

Sepsis Prevention Checklist

1. Basic Hygiene & Infection Control

Wash Hands Frequently: Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, before eating, and after touching surfaces in public.

Sanitize: Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) when soap and water are not available.

Avoid Sick Contacts: Stay away from people who are currently sick with respiratory or other contagious infections.

Food Safety: Cook meat thoroughly and wash fruits and vegetables to avoid food-borne illnesses like E. coli or Salmonella.

2. Wound Care

Clean Immediately: Wash any cut, scrape, or insect bite with soap and water immediately.

Keep It Covered: Use a clean, dry bandage to protect open wounds from bacteria until they heal.

Monitor for Infection: Check wounds daily for "Red Flags":

Redness spreading around the wound.

The skin feeling hot to the touch.

Increased pain.

Pus or discharge.

Avoid Water Sources: Do not swim in lakes, rivers, or hot tubs if you have an open wound.

3. Vaccinations

Flu Shot: Get an annual influenza vaccine. Flu is a common precursor to sepsis.

Pneumonia Vaccine: If eligible (usually children, older adults, or those with chronic conditions), get the pneumococcal vaccine. Pneumonia is the #1 cause of sepsis.

Other Vaccines: Stay up to date on COVID-19, Tetanus, and Chickenpox (Varicella) vaccinations.

4. Managing Chronic Conditions

Control Blood Sugar: If you have diabetes, keeping blood sugar levels within a healthy range is critical for wound healing and immune function.

Foot Care (Diabetics): Inspect feet daily for blisters or cuts you might not feel due to neuropathy.

Adhere to Meds: Take medications for heart, lung, or kidney disease exactly as prescribed.

5. Antibiotic Stewardship

Take as Prescribed: Finish the full course of antibiotics, even if you feel better, to ensure the bacteria are fully eradicated.

Do Not Reuse: Never take leftover antibiotics or antibiotics prescribed for someone else.

Viral Awareness: Do not demand antibiotics for viral infections (like a cold or the flu); they do not work on viruses and can contribute to antibiotic resistance.

6. "Secondary Prevention" (Catching it Early)

Know the Symptoms (TIME):

Temperature (Higher or lower than normal)

Infection (Signs of an infection)

Mental Decline (Confused, sleepy)

Extremely Ill ("I feel like I might die")

Advocate: If you have an infection and you aren't getting better, ask your doctor directly:
"Could this be sepsis?"