

Recovering in a Nursing Home After Sepsis:

What Survivors Need to Know

What is sepsis? Sepsis is a complication caused by the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to an infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

How will I feel at the nursing home?



You have been seriously ill, and your body and mind need time to get better. Upon admission to the nursing home you may experience physical symptoms such as:

- Weakness and fatigue
- Breathlessness
- Body pains or aches
- Difficulty moving around
- Difficulty sleeping
- Weight loss, lack of appetite, food not tasting normal
- Dry and itchy skin
- Brittle nails and hair
- Unsure of yourself
- Not caring about your appearance
- Wanting to be alone, avoiding friends and family
- Flashbacks, bad memories
- Confusing reality (e.g., not sure what is real and what is not)
- Feeling anxious, more worried than usual
- Poor concentration
- Depressed, angry, unmotivated
- Frustration at not being able to do everyday tasks

Recovery steps



After you have had sepsis, rehabilitation usually starts in the hospital. The purpose of rehabilitation is to restore you back to your previous level of health or as close to it as possible. Begin your rehabilitation by building up your activities slowly, and rest when you are tired.

- Your healthcare provider will prescribe a treatment plan.
- During your care planning conference, set small, achievable goals for each week with the staff.
- Follow activity restrictions that your healthcare provider recommends.
- Rest and rebuild your strength. Try to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Always feel free to ask any questions you have to your doctor, nurses, or any staff member.

Appointments



- Your healthcare team will schedule your follow-up appointments.
- Talk with your provider about any questions or fears you or your family members have.

Measures to reduce the risk of infections and sepsis



- Vaccinate against preventable infections, such as flu, pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), meningitis, or measles.
- Have a healthy lifestyle and practice good hygiene.
- Regularly and thoroughly wash hands with soap (e.g., after using the toilet, after cleaning your nose, or after coming in contact with animals or raw meat).
- Pay attention to insect bites and skin injuries.

Contact a staff member if you have the following symptoms



- Fever
- Shivering or very cold
- Pale or discolored skin
- Pain and body aches that are worse than normal
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fast or skipping heartbeat
- Dizziness when standing up or fainting
- Sleepy, hard to wake up
- New onset or more confusion
- Shortness of breath
- Redness, swelling, pain, warmth, or drainage of pus from any wounds or intravenous (IV) site
- Anxiety

Reference:

CDC. Life After Sepsis Fact Sheet. Available at: www.cdc.gov/sepsis/media/pdfs/life-after-sepsis-fact-sheet-508.pdf. Accessed on September 22, 2026.

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