

# Suspected sepsis: evaluating risk of severe illness or death in all settings

Age	High risk	Moderate to high risk
<b>Heart rate (beats per minute)</b>		
Under 1	160 or more	150 to 159
1 or 2	150 or more	140 to 149
3 or 4	140 or more	130 to 139
All ages	Less than 60	
<b>Respiratory rate (breaths per minute)</b>		
Under 1	60 or more	50 to 59
1 or 2	50 or more	40 to 49
3 or 4	40 or more	35 to 39
<b>Temperature (°C)</b>		
Under 3 months	38 or more	
3 to 6 months		39 or more
All ages	Less than 36	
<b>Respiration: other criteria</b>		
All ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxygen saturation &lt; 90% in air, <b>OR</b> increased oxygen requirement over baseline</li> <li>Grunting</li> <li>Apnoea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxygen saturation &lt; 92% in air, <b>OR</b> increased oxygen requirement over baseline</li> <li>Nasal flaring</li> </ul>
<p>Note: some pulse oximeters can underestimate or overestimate oxygen saturation levels, especially if the saturation level is borderline. Overestimation has been reported in people with dark skin. See also the NHS England Patient Safety Alert on the risk of harm from inappropriate placement of pulse oximeter probes.</p>		

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Age	High risk	Moderate to high risk
<b>Behaviour</b>		
All ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response to social cues</li> <li>• Appears ill to a healthcare professional</li> <li>• Does not wake, or if roused does not stay awake</li> <li>• Weak high-pitched or continuous cry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not responding normally to social cues</li> <li>• No smile</li> <li>• Wakes only with prolonged stimulation</li> <li>• Decreased activity</li> <li>• Parent or carer concern that child is behaving differently from usual</li> </ul>
<b>Other criteria</b>		
All ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mottled or ashen appearance</li> <li>• Cyanosis of skin, lips or tongue</li> <li>• Non-blanching rash</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capillary refill time 3 seconds or more</li> <li>• Reduced urine output <b>OR</b> for catheterised patients, less than 1 ml/kg of urine per hour</li> <li>• Pallor of skin, lips or tongue</li> <li>• Leg pain</li> <li>• Cold hands or feet</li> </ul>
All ages	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Low risk</b></p> <p>No high risk or moderate to high risk criteria met</p>	



Also see the visual summaries on:

[Managing risk of severe illness or death outside acute hospital settings](#)  
[Managing risk of severe illness or death in acute hospital settings](#)