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

High risk	Moderate to high risk
Heart rate (beats per minute)	
More than 130	91 to 130 (in pregnancy: 100 to 130)
Respiratory rate (breaths per minute)	
25 or more, **OR** new need for 40% oxygen or more to maintain saturation more than 92% (or more than 88% in known chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)	21 to 24

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.

High risk	Moderate to high risk
Temperature (°C)	
	Less than 36 (tympanic temperature)
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)	
90 or less, **OR** more than 40 below usual	91 to 100
Behaviour	
• Objective evidence of altered mental state	• History from patient, friend or relative of new onset of altered behaviour/mental state • History of acute deterioration of functional ability

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High risk	Moderate to high risk
Other criteria	

• Not passed urine in previous 18 hours, or for catheterised patients passed less than 0.5 ml/kg of urine per hour
• Mottled or ashen appearance
• Cyanosis of skin, lips or tongue
	• Not passed urine in the past 12 to 18 hours, **OR** for catheterised patients passed 0.5 to 1 ml/kg of urine per hour
	• Impaired immune system (illness or drugs, including oral steroids)
	• Trauma, surgery or invasive procedures in last 6 weeks
	• New-onset arrhythmia
	• Signs of potential infection
	  ◦ redness
	  ◦ swelling or discharge at surgical site
	  ◦ breakdown of wound

Low risk

No **high risk** or **moderate to high risk** criteria met

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