

The Fatal Five in ID/A

There are five major health issues identified in people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) that lead to serious illness, infections and sometimes death. They are called the **Fatal Five: choking/aspiration, constipation, dehydration, seizures, and infection.**



Choking



Constipation



Dehydration



Seizure



Infection

Infection happens when microorganisms enter a person's body and cause harm. These microorganisms include bacteria, viruses, and fungi.

Increased Risk for Infection

- Presence of a weakened immune system
- Over age 65
- Recent surgery
- Presence of a wound
- Chronic illness — COPD, asthma, diabetes
- Recent cold/flu
- Women have increased risk for UTI
- Difficulty swallowing- can lead to aspiration pneumonia
- Having an implanted device such as a central line or urinary catheter

Be Proactive

- Be aware of baseline health, behavior, and demeanor
- Be aware of how pain, discomfort and illness are expressed
- Take health concerns seriously
- Assist in making appointments with a healthcare provider for individuals showing signs of infection

Types of Infection

Respiratory Infection

Common cold, tonsillitis, sinusitis, laryngitis, flu, bronchitis, and pneumonia

Urinary Tract Infection Types

Also known as UTIs are caused by bacteria. They can occur in any part of the urinary system.

Sepsis

An extreme inflammatory response by the body to an existing infection.

Signs of Infection

Respiratory Infection

Headache, nasal congestion, nasal drainage, sneezing, sore throat, aching muscles, coughing/ productive cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness, and fever.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

Strong urge to urinate, burning sensation when urinating, increased frequency of urination, cloudy urine, red or pink or cola colored urine (blood in urine), strong smelling urine, pelvic pain.

Sepsis

Fever, shivering/chills, low blood pressure, rapid breathing, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, confusion, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, decreased urination, extreme pain/discomfort.