

Cellulitis

What is an Cellulitis?

Cellulitis is a skin infection caused by bacteria. Cellulitis is common and can become severe. Cellulitis usually appears on the lower legs. It can also appear on the arms, face, and other areas.



Common Causes & Risk Factors

Cellulitis develops when bacteria enter a crack or break in your skin, such as a scratch, bite, or cut.

Signs and symptoms

- A fever
- A red, warm, swollen area on your skin
- Pain when the area is touched
- Red spots, bumps, or blisters that may drain pus
- Bumpy, raised skin that feels like an orange peel

Diagnosis

Doctor may Confirm if patient has cellulitis by looking skin. Some blood tests to diagnose what kind of bacteria are causing infection. Other tests may be needed to see how much the infection has spread.

Treatment

- Patient should start to see improvement in 3 days. If cellulitis is severe, patient may need IV antibiotics in the hospital. If cellulitis is not treated, the infection can spread through body and become life-threatening.
- Antibiotics help treat the bacterial infection
- Acetaminophen decreases pain and fever
- NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen, help decrease swelling, pain, and fever.

Clinical teaching

- Wash the area with soap and water every day. Gently pat dry.
- Elevate the area above the level of your heart as often as you can. This will help decrease swelling and pain. Prop the area on pillows or blankets to keep it elevated comfortably
- Place a cool, damp cloth on the area. Use clean cloths and clean water.
- Apply cream or ointment as directed. These help protect the area. Most over-the-counter products, such as petroleum jelly, are good to use.

Reference: Micromedex's Care Notes System Online 2.0