

Title: Cellulitis

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Abstract: Cellulitis is an infection of the skin and soft tissues, typically due to bacteria. It begins with red, tender, swollen area of skin. It can spread into the blood and lymph nodes and cause sepsis, a severe infection of the entire body. It is important to seek medical attention when the first signs are present. Typically, early infections can be treated with oral antibiotics. If the infection worsens, intravenous (or medicine into your bloodstream) antibiotics may be necessary and patients may have to stay in the hospital to be monitored.

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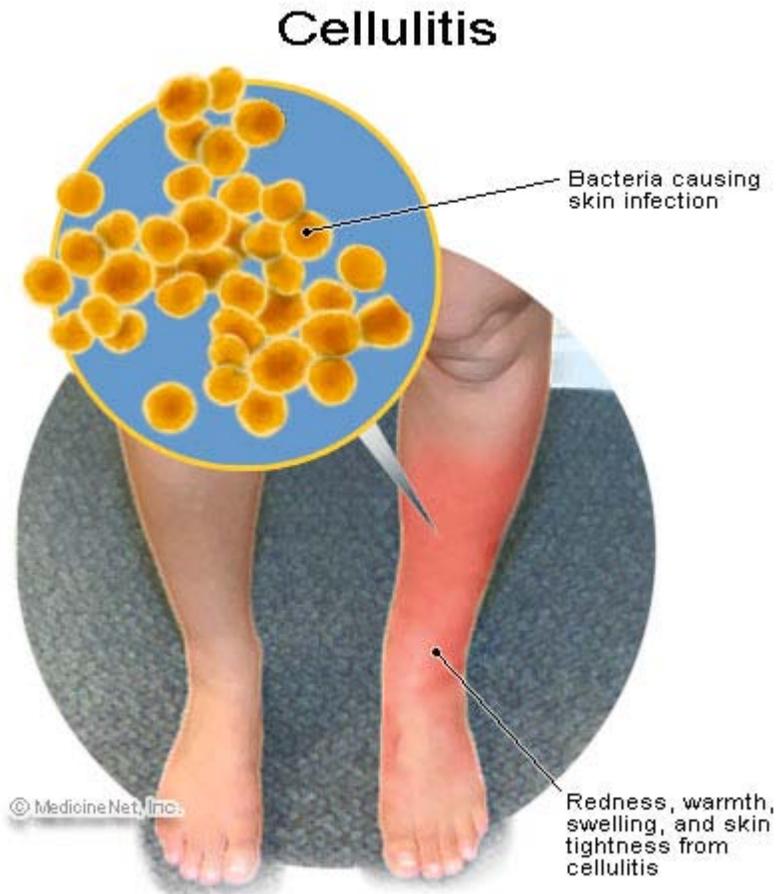
Cellulitis

What is cellulitis?

Cellulitis is a skin or soft tissue infection caused by bacteria. Usually, skin helps protect from infection. Any way bacteria can get past the skin barrier can lead to this type of infection. This can happen after a cut, scrape bite, incision from surgery or sore. This is treated with antibiotics to avoid spread from under the skin, as this can go into the blood or lymph system.

Anyone can get cellulitis. Some people are more likely to, such as those with diabetes or who have weak immune systems from illness or some medications.

Usually, *Staph* or *Strep* types of bacteria cause cellulitis. Some people with poor immune system may have cellulitis caused by different, less common bacteria.

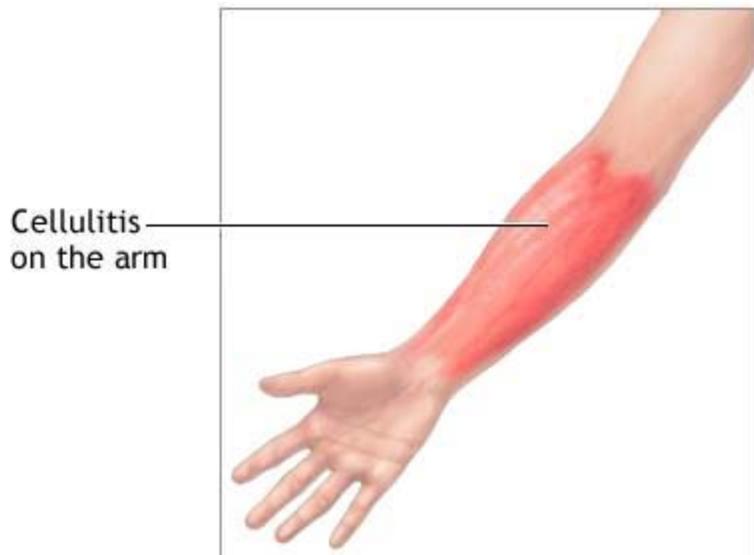


What are the symptoms?

Often times, people will remember a cut or injured area. The area first becomes red, tender and hot to the touch and swollen. Sometimes, patients may notice the redness spreading or red streaks coming from the place where the redness started. See your doctor if you notice these signs.

If the infection spreads and worsens, some patients may feel chills or fevers. Sometimes, patient can feel sick to their stomach, or even vomit. These are signs that the infection may be spreading to the entire body. Immediate attention by a doctor is needed if these signs and symptoms are present.

Cellulitis can happen anywhere, often on the legs or arms. If noticed around the face/eyes or in the groin area, go see your doctor right away.



ADAM.

How is it treated?

Doctors use antibiotics to treat cellulitis. If the infection is mild, you may be able to take antibiotic pills at home. If the infection is severe, you may need to be treated in the hospital or your home with intravenous (IV) antibiotics (that go right into your bloodstream.)

If your doctor prescribes antibiotics, it is important to take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.

It is very important to get treatment right away for cellulitis. If it is not treated, the bacteria can spread quickly through the body and lead to *sepsis*, which can be deadly. If the cellulitis is on the face or around the eyes, it can lead to infections in the brain (encephalitis) or spinal cord (meningitis).