

THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CELLULITIS AND SOFT-TISSUE INFECTION

In the Clinic
Annals of Internal Medicine
annals.org

What is cellulitis?

- Cellulitis is an infection that involves the skin or the muscles and other body tissues directly under the skin. Symptoms can include redness, pain, and fever.

Who gets cellulitis?

- Cellulitis can happen after an injury to the skin, an animal bite, or a surgical wound, but sometimes there is no obvious cause.
- Conditions that increase the chances of cellulitis include diabetes, circulatory problems, past surgery or radiation treatment of the arms or legs, and chronic athlete's foot.

What is the treatment for cellulitis?

- Treatment usually involves cleaning the injury or wound, if present, and antibiotics.
- If the infection is severe, then hospitalization for intravenous antibiotics may be necessary.
- Sometimes surgery is needed to clean and drain the infected area.

Can you prevent cellulitis?

- Look out for early signs of infection.
- Clean any skin injuries very well.
- See a doctor if you have an animal bite.



- Patients with diabetes should talk to their doctors about proper foot care to prevent infection.
- Keep skin moisturized to prevent cracks.
- If you have athlete's foot, treat it.

Cellulitis can be an emergency. See a doctor if you notice:

- a very large area of red, inflamed skin
- fever
- affected area of skin is numb, tingling, or in severe pain
- skin seems black, purple, or has blisters
- redness or swelling around the eye(s) or behind the ear(s).

For More Information

Medline Plus

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cellulitis.html

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/streptococcal/

University of Virginia (information in English and Spanish)

www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/adult_derm/cell.cfm

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