

Patient information

Cellulitis

Tissue Viability

What is Cellulitis?

Cellulitis is an acute infection of the skin and underlying area.

Signs and Symptoms

- Redness, pain and swelling to the affected area.
- You may also have a high temperature.
- Sometimes blisters can appear and begin to weep. This is a normal reaction to a skin infection.

How is it caused?

- Sometimes a break in the skin, for example a cut, can allow germs to enter, and this can cause a reaction. This reaction is called cellulitis.
- Cellulitis can affect any area of the body, most commonly the legs and face.

How is it treated?

- Antibiotics are usually given into a vein in your arm for at least 48 hours. You will then be given a five to seven day course of oral antibiotics.
- You will be given painkillers to ease any pain. Please tell the nursing staff if these painkillers do not work, as you can be given stronger painkillers.
- Resting on your bed will reduce leg swelling and help with healing.
- Elevating your leg can reduce swelling.
- An absorbent dressing secured with a stocking-type bandage will be put on the affected area to absorb any fluid from any damaged skin or blisters. This dressing will be changed when the fluid has soaked into it.
- You can continue to bathe or shower as normal. Tap water will not harm any broken areas of skin.

Follow up care

In some cases, cellulitis can return.

To prevent this:

- Avoid scratching your skin and protect legs to prevent cuts and bruises.
- Wash your legs and feet every day – particularly between the toes.
- After washing, ensure you dry gently yet thoroughly.
- Apply moisturiser daily to any dry and cracked skin.
- Ladies who shave their legs should use hair removal cream
- Visit your Chiropodist regularly.

If you think that cellulitis has returned when you are discharged, please contact your family doctor (GP).

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information**Tissue Viability Nurses**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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