

Cellulitis

General Information

Cellulitis is an infection of the skin. It is most common on the arms or lower legs. You can also get it on your face and around your eyes. Cellulitis does not spread from person to person.

Antibiotics will help the infection go away in seven to 10 days. Without treatment, the infection can get into your blood and cause a blood infection.

How You Get Cellulitis

You can get cellulitis:

- by a bacteria (germ)
- from insect bites, scratches or small cuts that become infected
- from animal bites
- from swimming in fresh water or salt water
- from burns
- after surgery.

You can get cellulitis around the eye as a result of an eye injury or a sinus infection.

Symptoms

The symptoms of cellulitis are:

- pain
- red and swollen skin
- chills, fever and sweating skin that is warm to the touch
- burns
- injury to an eye
- sinus infection
- skin that itches or burns.

Treatment

- Your doctor will prescribe an antibiotic. Take the entire prescription as directed, even if you start to feel better.
- Take pain medicine as directed by your doctor.
- Place a wet (warm or cool) dressing on your skin to help lessen the pain.

When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- any of your symptoms continue even after you have finished taking your antibiotic prescription
- your symptoms become worse
- you develop new symptoms.