

# Recognizing and Treating Cellulitis

A cut or other break in the skin can let in bacteria that cause Cellulitis, a potentially serious skin infection.

*“Cellulitis is an infection of the skin. Most commonly we do see it in the legs, however it can be in the arms, in the face and hands. When it becomes very severe, it can spread to the bloodstream and become a very serious infection.”*

Symptoms of Cellulitis include redness, tenderness, warmth, swelling, a fever, blisters and pus from the infected area. Obesity and Diabetes increase the risk of cellulitis, as do certain skin conditions, poor circulation, and a weakened immune system.

*“Antibiotics are the main treatment for cellulitis. Typically, you take them for up to 14 days. It’s important to finish the entire prescription, even if you start to feel better.”*

In some cases, antibiotics may be given instead by IV. Treatment may also include medication to relieve pain and for more severe infections, surgery. As for what you can do, apply a dressing or bandage to keep the skin clean and dry. Rest and elevate the affected area to bring down swelling and speed healing. Get immediate medical attention if the infected area spreads, the pain or swelling increases, or you have a high fever after two days of taking antibiotics.

*“If you’re not getting better within the first two days of starting treatment for your cellulitis, you should contact your healthcare provider. Or, if you have a serious condition such as diabetes, you should contact your healthcare provider within the first day if you’re not seeing signs of improvement. Cellulitis is a serious condition and it’s important to stay on top of it.”*