Cellulitis Skin Infection

Cellulitis is a bacterial infection that occurs in the skin. Everyone has bacteria on their skin and most bacteria are harmless. Sometimes, when there is an opening in the skin, these bacteria can cause infection.

What You Need To Know

Cellulitis occurs when there is a puncture wound, cut or scrape, or surgery. Other skin conditions, such as dermatitis that may cause breaks in the skin can also put you at risk.

Different types of bacteria can cause Cellulitis. The most common bacteria are:

- Staphylococcus aureus or methycillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Streptococcus group A or B
- Streptococcus pneumoniae

Signs of Cellulitis

Cellulitis can spread from the site of infection to other parts of the body. You may have one or more of these signs:

- Red streaks or rash spreading out from infection site that is painful
- Skin that becomes tender or swollen
- Blisters, pus or drainage from the infection site
- Fever or chills

Learn more about your health care.
• Muscle stiffness or joint pain

• If you feel intense pain in the face or in the groin area, this may be a sign of the infection spreading.

Treatment of Cellulitis

Cellulitis is often treated with medicines called antibiotics. **Cellulitis must be treated quickly** so that the infection does not go deeper into the skin layers or enter the blood stream. If the blood becomes infected from bacteria, this is called sepsis.

If the bacteria are resistant to some antibiotics, other medicines can be used for treatment. Your doctor will find a treatment that works for you.

Preventing Cellulitis

• Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or rub your hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer until the hands are dry.

• Wear clean bandages over wounds, cuts or scrapes and change them when the bandage is dirty or wet. Use an antibiotic cream to prevent infection.

• Wear shoes and gloves as needed. Cellulitis occurs where it is easy to get cut or scraped, such as the hands, arms, legs or feet.

• If you have diabetes or have a weak immune system, talk with your health care provider about ways to prevent infection. This may include daily checks of your feet for any cuts, scrapes or sores that could become infected.

• Call your doctor if you have pain, redness or pus where you have an opening in the skin. This is a sign of infection.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu