

Cellulitis

What is it?

Cellulitis is a bacterial skin infection. The infected area may be swollen, red, hot and tender. Common and sometimes painful, cellulitis can spread quickly. If left untreated, cellulitis can cause serious harm. Treatment is usually an antibiotic.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP may give you an antibiotic to treat your cellulitis and:

- Treat any wounds or broken skin
- Check for fever, pain and swelling
- Give you medication for pain relief and a tetanus injection, if needed
- Show you how to take care of your wound and help you learn more about cellulitis

If the cellulitis is severe, your GP may need to arrange IV antibiotics. This may be done at a local hospital, or through the South Western Sydney Local Health District Hospital in the Home (HiTH) service.

What will my GP in the future?

Your GP will arrange a review in a few days to check your infection. Your GP may also treat any other skin conditions such as eczema and give you strategies to help speed recovery and prevent recurrence.

With proper care, your cellulitis should improve in a few days. However, it can take several weeks to disappear completely. If you have fever, pain and swelling, you may need to go to hospital.

What can I do?

Follow your GP's advice and take your medication as directed. Attend all follow-up appointments to make sure your cellulitis is improving. It can be helpful to keep a diary of your symptoms. If you start to feel worse, contact your GP urgently.

What supports are available?

If you require IV antibiotics, the (HiTH) service can provide treatment in your home and not the hospital. Your GP is able to refer to this service if it is needed.

Where can I learn more?

- **AIMED** – Cellulitis 101: Importance of routine skin care: aimed.net.au
- **Agency for Clinical Innovation** – Cellulitis patient factsheet: aci.health.nsw.gov.au