

# THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CELLULITIS AND SOFT-TISSUE INFECTION

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## What is cellulitis?

- Cellulitis is an infection that involves the skin or the muscles and other body tissues directly under the skin. Symptoms can include redness, pain, and fever.

## Who gets cellulitis?

- Cellulitis can happen after an injury to the skin, an animal bite, or a surgical wound, but sometimes there is no obvious cause.
- Conditions that increase the chances of cellulitis include diabetes, circulatory problems, past surgery or radiation treatment of the arms or legs, and chronic athlete's foot.

## What is the treatment for cellulitis?

- Treatment usually involves cleaning the injury or wound, if present, and antibiotics.
- If the infection is severe, then hospitalization for intravenous antibiotics may be necessary.
- Sometimes surgery is needed to clean and drain the infected area.

## Can you prevent cellulitis?

- Look out for early signs of infection.
- Clean any skin injuries very well.
- See a doctor if you have an animal bite.



- Patients with diabetes should talk to their doctors about proper foot care to prevent infection.
- Keep skin moisturized to prevent cracks.
- If you have athlete's foot, treat it.

## Cellulitis can be an emergency. See a doctor if you notice:

- a very large area of red, inflamed skin
- fever
- affected area of skin is numb, tingling, or in severe pain
- skin seems black, purple, or has blisters
- redness or swelling around the eye(s) or behind the ear(s).

## For More Information

### Medline Plus

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cellulitis.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cellulitis.html)

### National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

[www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/streptococcal/](http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/streptococcal/)

### University of Virginia (information in English and Spanish)

[www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/adult\\_derm/cell.cfm](http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/adult_derm/cell.cfm)

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