

Let's Talk About...

Cellulitis

Cellulitis (sell-you-LITE-iss) is an infection of the tissue just under the skin. It can occur anywhere on the body. The skin may swell and become red, warm, and tender. Fever and chills are also common signs.

Cellulitis is a serious infection and should be treated right away. Without treatment, it may spread to the blood, bones or other organs. Children with cellulitis on the face or near a joint usually need to go to the hospital for treatment.

What causes cellulitis?

Bacteria enters the body through an injury, surgery site, cut or scratch and causes the tissue under the skin to be sore. It also travels through the blood from another infection, such as an ear infection. Children with chickenpox or eczema are more likely to get cellulitis.

How do you prevent cellulitis?

Keep cuts and wounds clean and dry, and wash your hands well. Children with eczema (dry, itchy patches on the skin) should see a doctor about creams and prescription ointments. When children are one year old, they should receive the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine. This will help keep your child from getting chickenpox and scratching, which can cause cellulitis.

How do you treat cellulitis?

Your child may receive the following treatments and tests for cellulitis:

- Antibiotics given by mouth or an IV (small tube that goes into the vein) may be placed so your child can receive medicines and fluids.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) for fever and pain. DO NOT give aspirin to children who have both chickenpox and cellulitis. See the note at the end of this article.
- A surgical opening to drain the infection

- Blood draws to find the bacteria that caused the infection. This will help the doctor choose the right antibiotics for your child.
- Fluid taken from the infected site with a needle to find the bacteria that caused the infection. This will help the doctor choose the right antibiotics for your child.
- X-ray, ultrasound, or CT scan (a more detailed X-ray test) to find out if the infection has spread deeper.

Your child's treatment and hospital stay depend on how serious the infection is. Children with cellulitis may stay in the hospital up to 10 days.

- **First day of treatment:** Sometimes the redness spreads because the bacteria being destroyed still makes the area sore.
- **One or two days of treatment:** Red area usually stops spreading.
- **Two to three days of treatment:** Red area usually starts to shrink and fever improves.

Children can eat their regular meals and do their everyday activities as long as they are comfortable.

Note:

You can give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain or a fever over 101°F (38.3°C).

You can give children six months and older ibuprofen for pain or fever. Do not give ibuprofen to children who are not drinking enough or throwing up.

DO NOT give aspirin or any medicine with aspirin in it to children with chickenpox or another viral infection. It may lead to a very serious brain, liver and kidney disease called Reye's syndrome. Read the labels on all medicines to make sure they don't have aspirin (also called salicylate) in it.

Intermountain Healthcare complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Se proveen servicios de interpretación gratis. Hable con un empleado para solicitarlo. 我們將根據您的需求提供免費的口譯服務。請找尋工作人員協助