

Weight Management

In order to reduce your risk of cellulitis it is important to eat a good healthy diet and exercise regularly.

If you are unsure what a 'normal' weight for you is, you should ask your therapist for more information.

Movement and Exercise

Gentle movement, exercise and activities will help the muscles pump lymph fluid (the fluid that causes oedema) more effectively through your body.

Movement and exercise help you improve and maintain flexibility and keeps your bones strong.

Being more active helps you achieve and maintain a healthy weight and it may improve your emotional wellbeing.

Reducing swelling or reducing the risk of swelling

If you have swollen legs or arms, a compression garment may help.

Ask your GP for a referral to Lymphoedema Clinic if you have swelling or discuss this with the cellulitis specialist.

Prophylactic Antibiotics

Should you have recurrent episodes of cellulitis (that is 2 or more cases in a year), you should speak to your GP or healthcare professional.

Some people may require intervention, such as long term antibiotics, to reduce the risk of further episodes of cellulitis.

Further Information

Cellulitis Management
www.thebls.com

Cellulitis Video Link
www.medic.video/cellulitis

Lymphoedema Video link
www.medic.video/n-lymph

Reducing the Risk of Lymphoedema
www.medic.video/w-lymph-risk



**NATIONAL CELLULITIS IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAMME (NCIP)**

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Reducing the Risk of Cellulitis (skin infection)

Top tips for reducing the risk of cellulitis

- ◆ **Daily skin care – wash and moisturise your skin**
- ◆ **Healthy eating - a lower BMI reduces the risk of cellulitis**
- ◆ **Be more active - regular activity and exercise is very important**
- ◆ **Act fast - if you think you have cellulitis contact your GP for antibiotics**

What is cellulitis?

Cellulitis is a skin infection which can affect any area of your body. Cellulitis is caused when a break in the skin (e.g. cut, ulcer, insect bite or dry cracked skin) allows bacteria to enter and cause an infection.

Cellulitis is not contagious and rarely affects more than one area of your body at the same time. If both of your legs are red, it is unlikely to be cellulitis.

Signs and symptoms of cellulitis:

- A red hot rash or blistering
- Pain and tenderness
- Swelling
- Feeling unwell (flu like) or fever
- Nausea or vomiting



If you think you have cellulitis seek urgent medical help from your GP

If you notice these symptoms out of hours, contact your out of hours GP service or 111 (NHS Direct). It is important to act quickly to prevent the cellulitis from getting any worse. You will need antibiotics as soon as symptoms occur and you must take them as prescribed.

If you have lymphoedema (chronic swelling), this will be for a minimum of two weeks due to the increased fluid in your tissues.

What are the risk factors associated with developing cellulitis?

The risk of Cellulitis is increased if you have:

- Damaged skin, for example dry / cracked skin, scratches and skin conditions such as dermatitis, psoriasis or eczema
- A wound
- Had a previous episode of cellulitis (in the same area of the body)
- Chronic swelling or oedema (lymphoedema)
- A fungal infection, for example in your toe or fingernail, or athlete's foot
- A high BMI (Body Mass Index) /overweight
- Difficulties maintaining personal hygiene and wearing clean clothes daily (socks, bra's, knickers or pants)
- Diabetes
- Conditions such as varicose veins, previous DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) or heart problems
- Issues with your immune system (undertaking chemotherapy)
- Problems with your mobility

Can you reduce your risk of cellulitis?

By addressing the risk factors, there is a lot you can do to reduce the risk of Cellulitis.

Skin care / hygiene

Daily skin care will help you to reduce the risk of infections:

- Wash your skin daily with warm water and mild soap/ shower gel
- Dry your skin thoroughly especially between the fingers and toes, paying particular attention to skin creases
- Apply any moisturising cream to your skin to prevent dryness
- Avoid sunburn by using a high factor sunscreen
- Try to avoid getting cuts and scratches in the garden and with pets, use gloves if appropriate and apply antiseptic and plasters
- Protect yourself by using an insect repellent if prone to bites