



SEPSIS AND CELLULITIS

Cellulitis is a type of infection that affects the skin and the tissue underneath. The bacteria, most commonly Group A Streptococcal bacteria, enter the skin through an opening, such as a cut, scrape, burn, or surgical incision. It can even happen through a bug bite or sting. Cellulitis can trigger sepsis for some.

Often incorrectly called blood poisoning, sepsis is the body's often deadly response to infection or injury.

Sepsis and septic shock can result from an infection anywhere in the body, such as pneumonia and urinary tract infections, and viral infections like the flu. Worldwide, one-third of people who develop sepsis die. Many who do survive are left with life-changing effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain and fatigue, organ dysfunction (organs don't work properly), and/or amputations.

CELLULITIS ATTACKS THE BODY

The infection is most commonly found on the lower legs, below the knee, but it can happen anywhere on the body. The symptoms for cellulitis include:

- Redness around the area where the bacteria entered the skin
- Tenderness, soreness of the affected area
- Swelling

Additional symptoms include:

- Blisters
- Fever
- 'Dimpling' of the skin

RISK FACTORS

Anyone can develop cellulitis, but some people have a higher risk than others. If you fall into one of the higher risk categories, you should watch any injuries to the skin carefully:

Impaired immune system: People who have an impaired immune system, including those undergoing chemotherapy or who have had their spleen removed, are more vulnerable to contracting infections.

Chronic illnesses: Illnesses like diabetes can increase your risk of developing infections. People with diabetes are particularly susceptible to getting sores on their feet and lower legs, which can become infected.

Skin conditions or disorders: Skin conditions and disorders such as eczema, shingles, even so-called childhood illnesses like chicken pox, can cause breaks in the skin.

Lymphedema: Lymphedema is a swelling of an arm or leg, most commonly caused by the removal of or damage to the lymph nodes as a part of cancer treatment. The swollen and stretched skin can crack.

Obesity: People who are obese have a higher risk of having cellulitis and of getting it again.

History of cellulitis: If you've had cellulitis before, you do have a higher risk of getting it again.

TREATMENT

If you suspect you have cellulitis, see your doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible. If you are given antibiotics, it is vital that you take them as prescribed, right to the end of the prescription, even if it appears the infection has gone away before the prescription bottle is empty. Ask your doctor or nurse practitioner when you should start seeing improvement. If you feel that the infection is worsening or there is no improvement despite treatment, have the infection checked again.

WHAT IS SEPSIS?

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

What are the signs and symptoms of sepsis?

Sepsis is a toxic response to an infection. There is no single sign or symptom of sepsis. It is, rather, a combination of symptoms.

Symptoms can include ANY of the following:

- T** **Temperature:** Higher or lower than normal
- I** **Infection:** May have signs and symptoms of an infection
- M** **Mental Decline:** Confused, sleepy, difficult to rouse
- E** **Extremely Ill:** Severe pain, discomfort, shortness of breath

SEPSIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY. IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS, CALL 9-1-1 OR GO TO A HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY.

To learn more about sepsis, or to read tributes and survivor stories, visit us online at [Sepsis.org](https://sepsis.org)



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