

# Cellulitis

(you say, sell-you-ly-tis)

Any area of skin can become infected with cellulitis if the skin is broken, for example from a sore, insect bite, boil, rash, cut, burn or graze. Cellulitis can also infect the flesh under the skin if it is damaged or bruised or if there is poor circulation.

## Signs your child has cellulitis:

- The skin will look red, and feel warm and painful to touch.
- There may be pus or fluid leaking from the skin.
- The skin may start swelling.
- The red area keeps growing. Gently mark the edge of the infected red area with a pen to see if the red area grows bigger.
- Red lines may appear in the skin spreading out from the centre of the infection.



## How is cellulitis spread?

Bad bacteria (germs) gets into broken skin such as a cut or insect bite.

## What to do

- **Cellulitis is a serious infection that needs to be treated with antibiotics.**
- **Go to the doctor if the infected area is painful or bigger than a 10 cent piece.**
- **Go to the doctor immediately if cellulitis is near an eye as this can be very serious.**
- Make sure your child takes the antibiotics every day until they are finished, even if the infection seems to have cleared up. The antibiotics need to keep killing the infection in the body after the skin has healed.
- Check and clean the infected skin every day.
- Wash the infected skin with warm water or in a salt bath. A teaspoon of salt, antiseptic or bleach could be added to a bath to help kill the bacteria.
- Cover with a clean cloth or plaster if fluid or pus is coming out of the infection.
- Keep the infected area raised, for example if the cellulitis is in your child's leg, they should lie down and put a pillow under their leg.
- Give your child paracetamol if they are in pain.

- Wash your hands before and after touching the infected area.
- Keep your child's nails short and clean.
- Don't let your child share bath water, towels, sheets and clothes.
- Make sure your child rests and eats plenty of fruit and vegetables and drinks plenty of water.

**Go back to the doctor if the red area gets bigger or deeper or your child has a fever.** Cellulitis can spread to other parts of the body or blood. Your child may need blood tests or more antibiotics.



If the doctor gives your child antibiotics, make sure your child takes them every day until they are finished, even if the infection seems to have cleared up earlier. The antibiotics need to keep killing the infection in the body after the skin has healed.

## Time off from kura or school

At least one day after treatment (such as antibiotics) has started, or check with your doctor or public health nurse.