Cellulitis

Accident and emergency

What is cellulitis?

You have been diagnosed with cellulitis, a common skin infection. It causes the skin to become red, warm, swollen, and sometimes painful. If not treated, the infection can spread and make you feel more unwell.

How is cellulitis treated?

Cellulitis is treated with antibiotic tablets or Intravenous (IV) antibiotics given through a vein.

If you need IV antibiotics, you may not need to stay in hospital. You can return each day to one of our ambulatory care units, or our community team can visit your home to give the treatment.

Before leaving the hospital, you will be told when and where to get your antibiotics and a date for a check-up.

When to seek help

Please contact your GP or call NHS 111 if you begin to feel worse at home or are concerned about your symptoms. **Signs that your condition may be worsening include:**

• Feeling increasingly unwell, or developing a fever
• The affected skin changing colour
• The area of infection spreading rapidly or becoming much larger.

What should I expect after leaving hospital?

If we feel you still need IV antibiotics, you may be discharged with a cannula (a small plastic tube placed in your vein). You will receive daily treatment either:

• At the Princess Royal Hospital or the Royal Sussex County Hospital, or

• At home, once the community OPAT team is ready to take over.

You will be contacted by phone when your home treatment is arranged.

Your treatment plan may include:

- Several days of IV antibiotics through your cannula (either in the ambulatory area or at home)
- Blood tests, usually around day 4
- A follow-up appointment with a doctor in an ambulatory care unit.

How should I look after the cannula?

- Keep your cannula dry and covered with the dressing provided.
- If it accidentally comes out, apply pressure with a clean cloth or plaster. A new cannula will be inserted at your next visit.
- If the skin around your cannula becomes red, sore or swollen, this may be a sign of infection:
  - If you are receiving care at hospital, come in for review.
  - If you are under the OPAT team, call and leave a message. They will call you back.
  - Alternatively, you can also contact your community IV team.

What happens during my medical review appointments?

When you return for treatment, please allow several hours for your visit. **You will receive:**

- Your dose of IV antibiotics
- A review by a senior doctor.

Refreshments (tea, coffee, snacks) are available during your stay.

Where to go

Royal Sussex County Hospital: Go to the Emergency Ambulatory Care Unit, Level 5 of the Thomas Kemp Tower (same floor as A&E). The entrance is beside the WRVS coffee shop and the Acute Medical Unit.

Princess Royal Hospital: Go to the Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC), located next to A&E.

Contact details

Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT) Team

01273 696955 Ext. 64922

Weekdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) (Princess Royal Hospital)

01444 441881 Ext. 68557

Weekdays and weekends 8:00 am to 8:30 pm

Emergency Ambulatory Care Unit (EACU) (Royal Sussex County Hospital)

01273 696955 Ext. 64002

Weekdays 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. Weekends 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

Further support

For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the NHS 111 service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.

The **NHS website www.nhs.uk/** provides online health information and guidance.

There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, Crawley Urgent Treatment Centre, Lewes Victoria Hospital, Horsham Minor Injuries Unit and Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital.

CPIG
carer and patient information group approved