

Wound care

If you have a wound, please keep the wound clean and covered with a dressing. Your wound may or may not need to be checked daily by your doctor / nurse or Accident and Medical centre team, just follow their instructions. They will change the dressing and check that the wound is improving.

Primary Options Acute Care (POAC)

Most cellulitis is managed in the community and funding is available to ensure that you can be treated close to home to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Your GP has access to POAC funding so intravenous antibiotics are free to you and funded for them. However, not all GPs offer intravenous antibiotics so you may be sent to another GP that does or to an accident and emergency centre.

It may be that you have been seen at Auckland Hospital and discharged on oral antibiotics. If these work there may be no need to return to your GP but if not then the follow up visit to your GP will also be funded by POAC.

For info on POAC please visit www.primaryoptions.co.nz or phone: (09) 535 7218



▶ General Information

Cellulitis is usually manageable in the community and your GP will determine if you need hospital treatment.

- Rest and elevate affected limb as advised
- Drink plenty of water
- Have a towel for your own use
- Use the medications provided
- Do hand hygiene

▶ Contact your doctor if you are:

- Worried at any time
- Having difficulties coping
- Feel unwell or feel you are getting worse

If you have any concerns regarding your cellulitis:

Contact your GP in the first instance or call the Rapid Community Action team on 09 631 1234 and press 1 for cellulitis.

Managing your cellulitis



with Auckland City Hospital

What is cellulitis?

Cellulitis is an infection of the skin causing redness, pain, swelling and warmth. Bacteria are commonly found on the surface of the skin and cause no harm – but if they manage to get under the skin they can cause an infection. It is important to get treatment for this with simple antibiotics from your GP as left untreated it can progress quickly.

Visiting your GP or A&M

If you have developed cellulitis it may be from a scrape, a wound or an insect bite or it may have an unknown cause. Most cellulitis can be managed with oral antibiotics from your GP. Your GP might prescribe oral antibiotics in the first instance and review you in a couple of days to ensure it is improving.

Do not stop taking your antibiotic.
*It is very important to take ALL the tablets.
Your infection may come back if you stop taking this medicine.*

If not improving your GP may suggest intravenous antibiotics (IVA). This is usually done in the community and does not require hospital admission.

Your doctor might have marked the redness with a marker to see if it is spreading or improving. Do not wash this off. However, it is also important to know that it is common to see the redness spread past the line for 2-3 days after treatment begins and as long as you are well the redness should slowly improve with further treatment over several days.

Intravenous Therapy

Intravenous antibiotics is simply a way of giving the same antibiotic more quickly into your system. A small needle is used to introduce a small tube into a vein in your hand. Antibiotics are then given in to the vein. It is common to do this in your GP clinic over a 20-30 minute session. If your GP practice cannot do this then they may send you to another GP that offers this or to a nearby accident and medical centre. This treatment is usually once daily over 3 days so you need to attend every day. It is free for you and your GP will claim back the funding via POAC. There is usually no need to come to hospital for this treatment. However, if treatment fails, is severe or your GP is concerned they may refer you into hospital for treatment.



Rest and Pain relief

Your doctor will discuss if it is safe to use paracetamol and ibuprofen or other appropriate pain relief and may give you a prescription. Take as the doctor ordered.

Please rest as much as possible
*with the affected area resting up on pillows.
Use the sling provided if your arm or hand is involved when walking around. This not only helps relieve pain, but also helps the healing process.*

Referral to hospital

Sometimes it is important that you come to hospital. This is usually due to the severity of your cellulitis which can cause high fevers, low blood pressure and a high heart rate or because you have other medical conditions that have become unstable or present a greater risk of treatment failure or because the cellulitis has spread quickly.

Visiting the Emergency Department

You may not have seen a GP and instead visited the Auckland hospital emergency department. Treatment in the emergency department will be the same as provided by your GP so you are likely to be given medication and sent back to see your GP for review. If you are placed on a ward it is because the doctors assessing you feel that there is a need to make certain your cellulitis is under control or that other medical or other issues place you at risk of treatment failure. Treatment for cellulitis on the ward is the same as in the community and a daily review will ensure that as soon as you are stable your treatment can be continued at home in the community.

Supporting discharge from hospital

If you have been admitted then once the doctors feel you are improving then you may be discharged to finish treatment for your cellulitis in the community. Your discharge will be supported by a nurse specialist who will provide you with information about your treatment at home or with a GP or A&M. They will coordinate this and might use POAC, ACC agencies, the Rapid Community Action Team or others to ensure your transition home is safe and efficient.