# Cellulitis

## What is cellulitis?

Cellulitis is an infection of the tissue under the skin. It causes swelling and redness. It can occur on any area of the skin or tissue. Common areas include the arm, hand, leg, foot, ear or area around the eye.

## What causes it?

Cellulitis is caused by bacteria. The bacteria can enter the body through an open wound and cause an infection. The bacteria can also move from an infected part of the body to another.

## How does it affect my child?

Your child may have a fever and a general sick feeling. The infection site may be red, warm, painful or firm.

## What tests will my child need?

A small amount of fluid from the site of infection may be cultured. This will help the doctor find out what bacteria are causing the infection. A blood test may be done to see if the bacteria are in your child's blood.

## How is cellulitis treated?

- Medicine called antibiotics may be given to your child to fight infection. Give your child medicine as instructed by the doctor or nurse.
- Warm, wet compresses can be used to help with pain.
- Pain relievers may be given as needed.
- The doctor may need to drain the infected area. The doctor will make a very small cut (incision) in the skin to drain the pus from the infected area.
- Good hand washing is needed to help prevent the spread of infection.
- See your child's doctor for a follow-up visit as suggested. The doctor will check to be sure that the infection is gone.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Swelling or redness that does not go away, or gets worse.
- Pain or a fever.
- Drainage from the infected area.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.