

| SERVICE | TIMES AVAILABLE | CONTACT NUMBERS |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| IV Therapy Nurse/OPAT | 8.30 - 4.30pm 7 days a week | 01296 315485 07810 181584 |
| Bank Holidays (on call basis) | 9am-4.30pm | 07810 181584 |
| Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit (AECU) SMH | 8am- 8pm Mon - Fri 8am – 5 pm Sat / Sun | 01296 418175 |
| Medical Unit Day Assessment Service (MUDAS) Wycombe | 8.30am - 5pm Mon - Friday | 01494 - 426318 |

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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Cellulitis

Explaining cellulitis and how it is treated

Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 316042

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

What is cellulitis?

Cellulitis is an infection of the deep layers of skin.

What causes it?

Cellulitis is usually caused by bacteria (germs) which normally live on the skin's surface. Damage to the skin (a spot, scratch or cut) allows bacteria to enter the deeper tissues and cause an infection.

What is the treatment?

Cellulitis responds well to antibiotic therapy. You may already have had a course of oral antibiotic tablets. However, if this did not help improve the cellulitis, your doctor may now feel it is necessary to treat it with intravenous (IV) antibiotics.

IV antibiotics are used in many types of bacterial infections. In some conditions IV antibiotics are more effective than oral antibiotics at reducing the level of infection that has occurred.

After-care:

Once the redness and swelling around the affected area has subsided, it is important to look after your skin to prevent further problems. You can do this by:

- Washing the affected area daily in warm water
- Applying regular moisturiser to prevent dry skin, cracks or scabs forming
- Avoiding direct exposure to sunlight or trauma
- Ask your doctor about compression hosiery to help prevent further episodes of cellulitis.

Things you can do to help your treatment:

- If your cellulitis is on your legs, rest, keep them elevated where possible and follow advice given about the best position to sit in. If it is on your arm, try and keep your lower arm raised above the level of your elbow.
- If either of these positions are uncomfortable, lie down as much as possible to help the drainage and circulation of the affected limb.
- Although rest and elevation are essential, you must also mobilise the joints around the affected limb, particularly your ankle if your lower leg is affected.
- Drink plenty of clear fluids e.g. water and squash.
- Finish the course of any prescribed oral antibiotics, even though you may feel better and the redness is subsiding.

IV antibiotic treatment as an outpatient

If your doctor feels you need IV antibiotic treatment you may be able to have this as an outpatient with:

- the OPAT (Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy) Service,
- Ambulatory Emergency Care Department (AECU), Stoke Mandeville Hospital,
- Medical Unit Day Assessment Service (MUDAS), Wycombe Hospital. A Nurse, in conjunction with the Doctors, will fully assess whether this would be appropriate.

Before being discharged from hospital, a device will be put into one of your veins, so you can receive your IV treatment. You will be given a leaflet about your device and how to look after it. Your GP will be kept informed of the planned treatment on discharge from hospital.

Where will I receive the treatment?

Whenever possible, you will be asked to return daily to the hospital to AECU / other day unit area or MUDAS. However, when this is not possible, either the IV therapy or community nurse will visit you at home.

If you are having treatment at home the IV therapy nurse will provide you with a set of hand-held notes containing information regarding your treatment, which you should keep with you at all times until the end of your antibiotic treatment.

How will I know if the IV antibiotics are working?

The team looking after you will carefully monitor your progress daily to ensure your cellulitis is responding to the IV antibiotic treatment.

Any blood samples taken will be reviewed by the team looking after you. They will ensure your treatment remains appropriate and advise if any changes to treatment are required. Your GP will be kept fully informed of your progress.

Once the infection has reduced you may require a course of oral antibiotics for about another five to seven days. These will be prescribed and dispensed by the discharging hospital.

What should I do if I feel unwell?

If you experience any of the following symptoms please call AECU / MUDAS or the OPAT service (Contact details are on the back page):

- Raised temperature (fever), shaking
- Increased pain or new pain
- Sore throat, aching, headache, nausea or diarrhoea
- Increased swelling to area / affected limb
- The area of redness is spreading
- Difficulty in breathing
- Blisters forming around affected area
- Dizziness, facial flushing or rash
- Swelling anywhere else on the body, including the mouth or tongue

If you need to return to hospital for any reason, you should take your hand-held notes with you or tell them you are being treated as an outpatient.