



You have been diagnosed with **cellulitis**. This is an infection in a deep layer of the skin that causes redness, pain, and swelling. Cellulitis happens when bacteria on the skin enter the body.

Normally bacteria live on the skin and don't cause any problems. But when a break in the skin happens, bacteria can enter the body. This can happen with a cut, scratch, animal bite, insect bite, or other skin conditions. But you may not have even noticed because it was so tiny.

What can I do to feel better?

- Keep the infected area clean and dry
- **As often as possible, raise the infected area above the level of your heart.** This helps decrease swelling. Try to do this for 30 minutes at least 4 times a day.
- If you have diabetes, it is very important that you monitor your blood sugar to help your infection get better.
- Take the antibiotic you were given as directed by your doctor.

When can I expect my infection to look better?

Typically, it will look better in 48-72 hours. **It is not unusual for the area of redness to be bigger (and extend outside of marked lines) over the first 48 hours**, but soon the area will become less bright and begin to fade. After 48 hours, the size of the area of redness should be receding as well. The changes on the skin can last for a few weeks, long after the infection has been adequately treated, so your skin may not look normal at 5 days. But, if you still have pain, heat, or bright red skin at day 5, you should call your doctor.

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if these occur:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- New drainage from the infection
- New fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Worsening pain in the infected area

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