

# Signs and Symptoms of Infection: For Patients with Lymphedema or Wounds

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## What is infection?

An **infection** is an increase of harmful microorganisms, like bacteria and virus, that multiply in the body. An infection may stay in one particular area or spread throughout the body. It can cause fever and other health problems, depending on where it occurs in the body.

## What causes infection?

There can be various causes for an infection. Listed are some of the most common reasons:

- Cracks, cuts, or breaks in the skin
- Surgical incisions (cuts)
- Puncture wounds
- Dry, flaky skin

## What is my risk for infection?

You might be at a higher risk for an infection if you have:

- Weakened immune system
- History of chronic (long-term) infections
- Lymphedema
- Skin conditions
- Cuts and scrapes
- Obesity

## What are the symptoms?

Possible symptoms of an infection may include all or some of the following:

- Redness
- Open wounds
- Skin that is warm to the touch
- Pain or discomfort
- Blisters
- Fever

## When should I see a doctor?

Contact your doctor right away if you notice any changes in your skin or if you have any of the symptoms listed above. It is especially important to contact your doctor if you are immunocompromised or have lymphedema. Infection should be addressed promptly due to the risk of infection spreading rapidly throughout the body.

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