

## Cellulitis

- Cellulitis is an infection of the deep layer of skin (dermis) and the layer of fat and tissues just under the skin (the subcutaneous tissues)
- It presents as an area of **painful, red, warm/hot, swollen skin**
- The leg is commonly affected, but any area of skin can be involved

### If any of the RED FLAG presentations:

- **Signs of sepsis** (see severe sepsis IAT)
- **Signs of necrotising fasciitis:**
  - Unwell (hypotensive, tachycardic, signs of sepsis)
  - Pain out of proportion to the degree of cellulitis
  - Crepitus (gas) in soft tissues (not always present)

**Alert senior doctor/  
nurse practitioner**

This is a limb  
threatening condition

- 1) Fully **expose the area** (enabling examination of the whole limb / affected body part) and apply a **wrist band**.
- 2) Record vital signs: **BP, HR, RR, SpO<sub>2</sub>, Temp, GCS, BM**  
Commence Obs Chart and perform Early Warning Score - follow ED Escalation Plan
- 3) Perform **pain score** and **give analgesia** as needed
- 4) If patient is afebrile and healthy other than the cellulitis, **NO investigations** are required - the patient is likely to be discharged on oral antibiotics

For all other patients, including those already on antibiotics with no improvement and those with any of the following:

- Pyrexia
- Hypotension / tachycardia
- Confusion
- Malaise
- Nausea/vomiting
- Tracking

**Cannulate & take bloods: FBC, UE, LFT, CRP. Complete VIPS.**  
If any red flag features as above will also require **Blood cultures**.

- 5) If the cellulitis is associated with a wound, take a wound swab

***Any tasks NOT completed within IAU should be handed over verbally to the team and placed on NURSE ORDERS***