

Home Treatment of Cellulitis Patient Information Leaflet



Clinical Decision Unit, Emergency Department, Cork University Hospital

Telephone Number: 021 4920231

What is Cellulitis?

Cellulitis is a skin infection caused by common bacteria that normally live on your skin. These bacteria only cause a problem if they get underneath your skin, often through a simple break or cut in the skin. You will require intravenous (IV) antibiotics to treat this infection.

What does receiving IV antibiotic therapy at home involve?

This involves a nurse from the Community Intervention Team visiting your home to give the IV antibiotics you have been prescribed.

What happens next?

You will be assessed by the Consultant in Emergency Medicine to see if you are suitable to receive treatment at home.

A plastic cannula will be inserted into your hand/arm through which you will receive your injections.

Following insertion of a cannula you will be admitted to the Clinical Decision Unit in the Emergency Department for commencement of your treatment.

Your response to treatment will be monitored while you are in the Clinical Decision Unit and after assessment.

What is a cannula?

A cannula is a small hollow plastic tube inserted into your hand/arm. This tube will be secured with a special bandage. After 72 hours the cannula will be removed. If however you still require intravenous antibiotics, a new cannula will be inserted.

How do I care for my cannula when I am at home?

To prevent infection your cannula must be kept clean and dry at all times at the exit site. A transparent dressing will cover the exit site. You should avoid heavy lifting and excessive movement of the arm to prevent dislodgement.

You can still bath/shower so long as the line is kept clean and dry. The line should not be immersed in the bath. If the dressing does become wet underneath, please tell the Community Intervention Team nurse when they arrive and they will renew it. Please do not swim with the cannula in place.

If the cannula site becomes red or painful this may indicate local infection at the site of cannula. Other signs of infection include inflammation, tenderness. If you notice any of these please contact the Clinical Decision Unit as soon as possible to arrange insertion of a new cannula.

If the cannula comes out, apply direct pressure to the area with cotton wool, gauze or a tissue. Maintain this pressure continuously until the bleeding has completely stopped. This can take several minutes—repeatedly removing the pressure to see if the bleeding has stopped prolongs the length of time it takes for this to happen. When the bleeding has stopped, apply a plaster.

Contact the Clinical Decision Unit, Emergency Department 021/4920231 as soon as possible to organise insertion of a new cannula in order to complete your course of antibiotic.

Keep applying direct pressure to the area.

Lift your arm above your head.

A nurse will remove the cannula when it is decided your IV antibiotics can be changed to tablet form. It will come out easily and be dressed with sterile gauze.

The other most important factor in your recovery is keeping the affected arm/leg raised (as explained prior to your discharge) at all times.

Take regular pain killers as advised prior to your discharge and do not return to work.

About the Community Intervention Team

This team was established to provide nursing and home help services in the community on a 7-day week bases within a 16km radius of Cork City.

As well as administering your treatment in the home the nurse will also monitor the progress of your treatment. Your GP will be advised that you are receiving home treatment for cellulitis. However the staff of the Clinical Decision Unit and the Emergency Department, in conjunction with

the Community Intervention Team, will be your main carers for the course of this treatment.

What happens now?

Before you leave the hospital you will be given a pharmacy pack containing the following;

Patient Information Leaflet For home treatment of cellulitis

Patient information leaflet for cefazolin

Patient information for Probenecid (if part of prescription)

Antibiotics for your treatment

Community Intervention Team Referral Form.

Home IV Antibiotic Prescription

An appointment to return in 48- 72 hours to the Emergency Department Review Clinic or the Clinical Decision Unit.

Bring the pharmacy pack with you whenever you return to the hospital.

What are the risks?

Allergic reaction to a drug may sometimes occur when a new drug is given. Your risk of a significant allergic reaction during the home phase of your treatment is very low as you have already received two or more doses of the antibiotic prior to your discharge from hospital. It is extremely unusual for any significant reaction to occur with further doses of the same drug.

When you return for your appointment:

Your bloods tests may be repeated.

The Emergency Medicine Physician will make a decision to discontinue IV antibiotics or continue with same for a further 48 hours.

A further clinic review will continue until the patient is changed to oral antibiotics and discharged to the patients GP. The GP will then be issued a discharge letter from the review clinic.

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If there are any issues that you are worried about in relation to the program, or you are concerned about your health on or after discharge you can contact a member of the CDU team who liaise with the Community Intervention Team (CIT)-

Contact Details

Clinical Decision Unit, Emergency Department, Cork University Hospital
24 hours:

Telephone Number: 021 4920231

Community Intervention Team

Between 08:00 - 23:30 on Weekdays, Weekends: & Bank Holidays.

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