Skin and Soft Tissue Infection

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WHAT IS IT?

Skin and soft tissue infections develop when bacteria invade the skin and surrounding structures. Common types of bacteria that are involved include *staphylococcus aureus* (staph) and streptococcus. MRSA (methicillin-resistant *staphylococcus aureus*) is a strain of staph that is resistant to several antibiotics. Bacteria are more likely to invade skin when the skin's defenses are compromised, such as with a cut, scrape, or burn. However, certain bacteria, such as MRSA, can also invade healthy skin.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms may include a skin lesion or area of skin that is:
- Red
- Warm to the touch
- Painful
- Swollen
- Full of pus or draining pus
- Accompanied by fever
- Sometimes MRSA infections are mistaken for spider bites

CARE OF SKIN AND SOFT TISSUE INFECTIONS:

- Keep wounds that are draining covered with clean, dry bandages.
- If you are unable to keep your wound covered with a clean, dry bandage at all times, do not participate in activities where you have skin to skin contact with other persons (such as athletic activities or close personal contact with a sexual partner) until your wound is healed.
- Clean hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel (only if hands are not visibly soiled). Always clean hands immediately after touching infected skin or any item that has come in direct contact with a draining wound.
- Dispose of all used bandages yourself. Do not leave soiled bandages in common areas (counters, floors).
- Maintain good general hygiene with regular bathing. Bathe immediately after exercise or athletics.
- Wash all clothing and towels after each use. Follow the item's label for laundering instructions. Drying completely in dryer is preferred.
- Do not share personal items, such as towels, clothing, bar soap, jar lotions or ointments, razors, or athletic equipment that touches the skin.
- Do not use pools or hot tubs until cleared by your healthcare provider.
- Clean equipment, and other high-touch environmental surfaces, with commercially available detergent or disinfectant that specifies *staphylococcus aureus* on the product label and is suitable for the surface being cleaned.

MEDICATION:

If medication has been prescribed by your clinician, take the medication as instructed. Make sure to complete the full course of therapy, as shortening courses may result in a recurrence, or development of, antibiotic resistance.

CONSULT HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL, IF:

- Symptoms are worsening despite therapy (ex. expanding redness)
- Pus re-accumulates after drainage.
- You are experiencing negative side effects to your medication.
- You develop a new fever.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: