



**European  
Reference  
Network**

for rare or low prevalence  
complex diseases

 **Network**  
Vascular Diseases  
(VASCERN)



# Cellulitis Flowchart for Patients with Lymphedema

Validated by the Pediatric and Primary  
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Signs and Symptoms

## Is this cellulitis?

- Signs**
- Redness
  - Rash
  - Red spots
  - Increased edema

Mark the outline of the area of the redness on the skin with a marker

- Symptoms**
- Fever
  - Pain or tenderness in affected limb/body part
  - Heat in affected limb/body part
  - Influenza like symptoms:
    - Chills, malaise, head ache, muscle pain, nausea, weakness

- Tests (optional)**
- Blood test
  - Culture if sepsis

*Not all signs and symptoms will be present at the same time or for all patients.*



## Diagnosis confirmed by a medical professional

Treatment

- Start immediately on antibiotics and as prescribed
- ALWAYS take the whole prescribed course of antibiotics
- Recommended for lymphedema patients: 10-14 days (or shorter depending on local guidelines)
- Associated steroids or anti-inflammatory drugs are not useful

- Antibiotics**
- Consult with your doctor about the most suitable antibiotics for your personal situation.
  - Intravenous if severe/sepsis

- As soon as tolerated start wearing compression to control edema and reduce pain
  - Consider a lower class garment, an older/used garment
  - Consider a bandage (short stretch)
- As soon as possible move around, with compression, to reduce edema

*Delaying treatment with antibiotics can increase the risk of sepsis*

*Delaying treatment with compression can increase the (lymph)edema*



### For recurrent cellulitis

- Reduce risks of further episodes by adhering to best practice in self-management (i.e. compression, weight management, skin care; see Do's and Don'ts - QR code below).
- Talk to your doctor about temporary prophylactic antibiotics if you have recurrent cellulitis.

## Self-management

Prevention

Every day

- Always wear adequate compression as prescribed
- Keep a healthy weight
- Take care of your skin
- Watch out for cuts, scratches, bites, burns, abrasions, blisters



- Seek medical attention for wounds or fungal infections and other skin conditions that are not healing or responding to treatment

*Every episode of cellulitis can damage the lymph vessels and increases the risk of further episodes, making it more difficult to manage your lymphedema*

**Listen to your body and pay attention to changes!**



**For more information:**  
YouTube: VASCERN Webinar: Infections and Lymphedema

[www.vascern.eu](http://www.vascern.eu):  
Do's and Don'ts Factsheet on "Compression", "Skin Care", "Cellulitis/erysipelas"





VASCERN, the European Reference Network on Rare Multisystemic Vascular Diseases, is dedicated to gathering the best expertise in Europe in order to provide accessible cross-border healthcare to patients with rare vascular diseases (an estimated 1.3 million concerned). These include arterial diseases (affecting aorta to small arteries), arterio-venous anomalies, vascular malformations, and lymphatic diseases.

VASCERN currently gathers 48 expert teams from 39 highly specialized multidisciplinary HCPs, plus 6 additional Affiliated Partner centers, coming from 19 EU Member States, as well as various European Patient Organisations, and is coordinated in Paris, France.

Through our 6 Rare Disease Working Groups (RDWGs) as well as several thematic WGs and the ePAG – European Patient Advocacy Group, we aim to improve care, promote best practices and guidelines, reinforce research, empower patients, provide training for healthcare professionals and realise the full potential of European cooperation for specialised healthcare by exploiting the latest innovations in medical science and health technologies.

More information available at: <https://vascern.eu>

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