

## **Elist Chatter on Cellulitis 6-12-12**

On June 12, Liz writes:  
Hello All,

This is the first time I've encountered this: we have a patient who currently has cellulitis in his feet. What are the contraindications for him participating in Aquatics at this point? If he needs to stay out of the water, how long until he can return to it? He is currently on antibiotics for his condition, starting 3-4 days ago. Thanks for your help with this one.

Megan answers:

Well, it depends on how bad the infection is. It is very common to get athlete's foot from a pool deck even if you are wearing pool shoes. The patient should not have any open cuts or sores. There's also the potential of the cellulitis returning. I hate to say it, but the pool is a Petrie dish full of "stuff".

James writes:

Our patients are not allowed in the pool with cellulitis until the infection is resolved and antibiotics are stopped. Risk for skin developing opens wounds is greater in the feet.

Barb writes:

I have had bouts of cellulitis, and it is usually the doctor's orders to stay out of the water until I am healed. I've had to go through three to four rounds of antibiotics to get a good handle on the infection, which can take a good four to six weeks. The least amount of time I had out of the water was two weeks once. Cellulitis is very painful and uncomfortable. Good luck to your client!

Barb B writes:

We require written permission from a doctor that the client is safe for water work before returning to the pool when they have any infection requiring prescription medication.

On June 13, Liz writes;

I think cellulitis is an indicator of a system-wide sepsis in the infected person. It seems like that sort of infection should NOT be around other people, whether in the pool or out.

Kim writes:

I agree with Liz. Cellulitis is an infection in the cells. Your patient needs to complete his course of antibiotics and be cleared by a physician before entering the pool. His feet will likely blister, peel and weep and it won't be pretty. :( Sorry.

A friend just had a form of cellulitis in her face...facial vein thrombophlebitis which is apparently very rare and potentially fatal.

If you ever have a patient with a strange red line starting at the corner of the mouth and heading towards the temple, bypass the dentist and go straight to ER! In her case, she went to the dentist, where they pulled a tooth that had a root canal (it didn't have to be

pulled) and stood around and wondered what it was. They ended up sending her home! Overnight it got worse and she saw her MD (doctor) the next morning and he and his colleagues stood around and stared at her face some more. They sent her to the hospital and after multiple tests, she was admitted with IV antibiotics and blood thinners. They released her too soon and the line started to come back. Soon her whole face was red and the doctor told her to go home and rub cream on it! So cellulitis hit her face on just the right side within 8 hours of finishing the oral antibiotics. She's still battling it and is on large dose antibiotics. Facial vein thrombophlebitis is very rare. I knew when she called me that first morning and told me she had this line on her face that it was bad and she should seek medical intervention immediately, but I had no idea just how hard it would be for her to be properly diagnosed and treated!

Kim

Liz replies:

Thanks to everyone for the responses on this issue. As much as I hate to stop my patient's progress I thought we would probably have to keep him out of the pool until healed and you all have confirmed that for me. Thank you again for all your expert knowledge that everyone so freely shares! This e-list is great :)

NKMartinez writes:

It is a distinct contraindication in a public or therapy pool for several reasons. These are the policies we follow:

1. Open wounds can contaminate the water for others.
2. The chemicals used to maintain the water may have an adverse effect on the patient's sores.
3. Heat may increase the seepage and therefore, make the situation worse.
4. If they should use equipment, it, too, becomes contaminated and needs to be disinfected.

Think about it...the cellulitis is a systemic reaction to an internal infection.