



Skin and Soft Tissue Infections

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Skin and soft tissue infections (SSTIs) are common infections in children. In fact, they are the second most common diagnoses leading to pediatric antibiotic prescriptions. As a result, it is important for these infections to be treated with the right antibiotics for the right duration.

Common SSTIs

Impetigo



Impetigo: Common superficial infection that occurs in the summer/fall. It can appear as blisters that pop and form a “honey colored” crust, or as blisters that do not form a crust.

Cellulitis and Erysipelas: Deeper infections of the skin that usually present as areas of redness that are also warm and tender. Often occurs after a scrape or other injury to the skin.

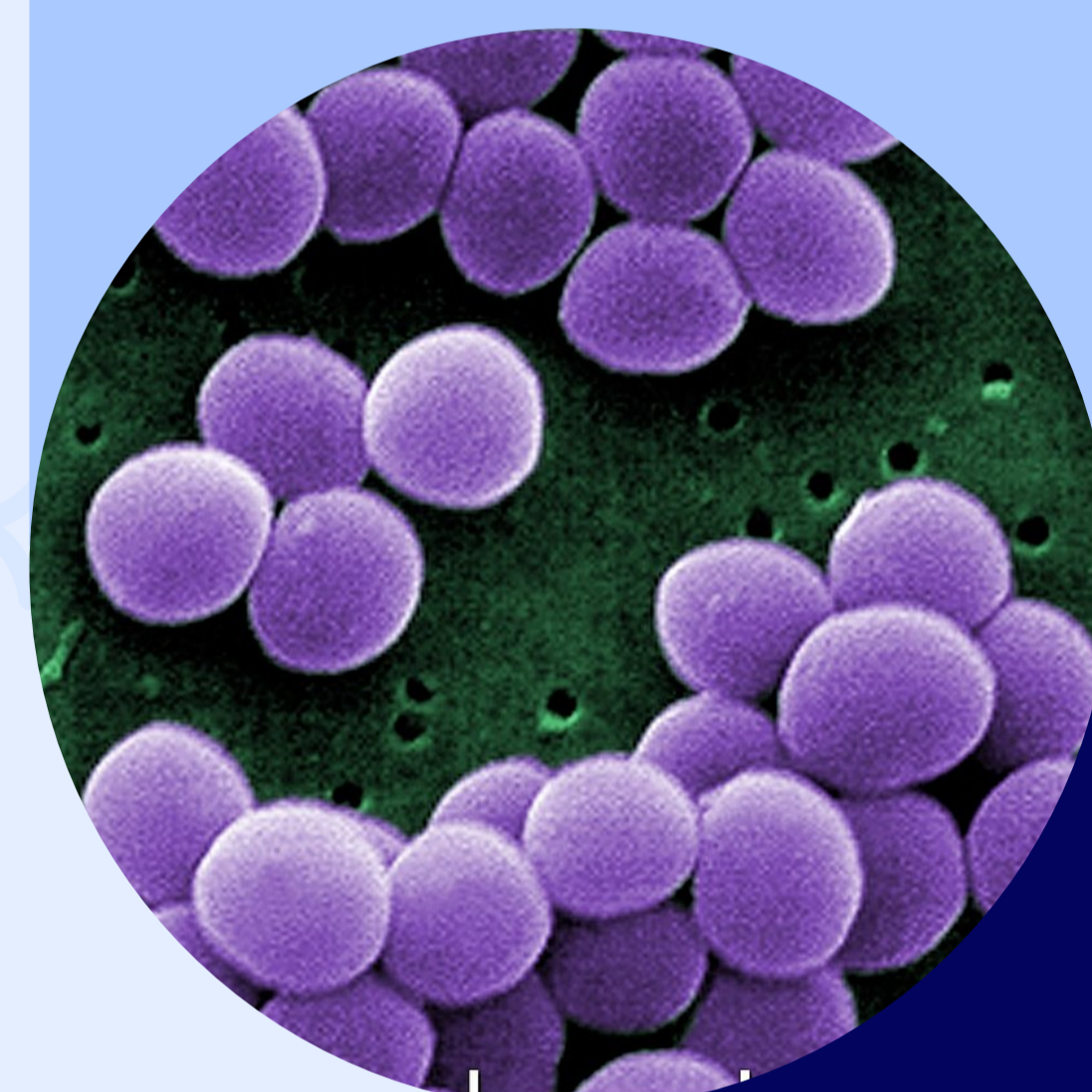
Abscess: Collection of pus in the skin. Often appears red, warm, swollen, and painful.

Cellulitis & Erysipelas



What organisms cause these infections?

Staphylococcus aureus



Impetigo, erysipelas, and cellulitis are usually caused by methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* (MSSA) or *Streptococcus pyogenes* (group A streptococcus (GAS)).

Cephalexin is a commonly used antibiotic because it treats 100% of MSSA and GAS. Methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA) rarely causes these infections.

Abscesses are also caused by *S. aureus* or GAS. There is a **greater chance of MRSA** in these infections, therefore antibiotics should include MRSA coverage. Good antibiotics to use include **clindamycin** or **trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole**.

Group A Streptococcus



What other treatment pearls are important?

Topical Antibiotics



Oral antibiotics are not always needed. With impetigo, topical antibiotics may be used alone if there are ≤ 5 small lesions. Some abscesses can be treated by just drainage by a clinician.

If prescribed, antibiotic **duration depends on infection type**. Impetigo with many lesions and cellulitis/erysipelas can be treated for 7 days with oral antibiotics. Cellulitis/erysipelas can be treated with 5-7 days. Abscesses can be treated for **5-7** days with or without drainage.

Treatment Duration



Where can I find more information?

Children's Mercy recently released a SSTI CPG that can be found [here](#). There is also a SSTI powerplan available for outpatient and inpatient use with recommended antibiotic choice, dosing, and duration.

For parents, the CDC provides information on SSTI which can be accessed [here](#).

Click [here](#) to take a quiz!



Guest author Dr. Megan Hamner recently completed an Infectious Diseases fellowship at Children's Mercy. Following fellowship, she will continue on to work as an attending physician in pediatric ID at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.