

Fast Facts

Necrotizing Fasciitis (Flesh-Eating Bacteria)

- A rare infection of the skin and the tissues below it
- Commonly caused by group A streptococcus (same one that causes strep throat)
 - Other types of bacteria can cause it as well
- The disease happens when the bacteria infect the superficial fascia, or layer of connective tissue below the skin
 - Once it enters the body, it spreads rapidly
 - It destroys not only skin but muscle and fat tissue too
 - Can be deadly if not treated quickly
- Certain things elevate the risk of developing it, like alcohol abuse, cancer, chickenpox, cirrhosis, diabetes, heart disease that affects heart valves, chronic kidney disease, weakened immune system, lung diseases, peripheral vascular disease, steroid use, or use of IV drugs

Symptoms	Treatment	Prevention
<p><i>Early (start within 24 hours):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inflammation -Fever -Nausea -Serious pain to the affected area <p><i>Also Entail a Combination of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increasing pain in the area -Pain that worse than expected from the appearance of the area -Redness/warmth to the area -Flu-like symptoms -Intense thirst from dehydration <p><i>Advanced (about 3 to 4 days after the initial infection):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Swelling (possibly along with a purplish rash) -Large/violet-colored marks that turn into blisters filled with dark/foul-smelling fluid -Discoloration/peeling/flakiness as tissue death occurs <p><i>Critical (develop by day 4 or 5):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Severe drop in blood pressure -Toxic shock -Unconsciousness -Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Depends on the which stage it is when it's diagnosed -Requires hospitalization <p>Typically involves some combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Intravenous (IV) antibiotics -Medications to maintain adequate blood pressure -Cardiac monitoring/breathing aids -Surgery to remove damaged/dead tissue -Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (to preserve healthy tissue) -Amputation of affected limbs (if necessary) -Blood transfusions -IV immunoglobulin (helps support the body's ability to fight infection) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wash your hands with soap and water, especially if your hands are visibly dirty, after going to the bathroom, or after handling certain foods, such as raw meats -If you don't have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer -Clean any cuts or open wounds with soap and water before covering them with a clean, dry bandage -Avoid swimming in the pool/lake/ocean or using a hot tube if you have an open wound or skin infection -If you have serious or deep wound, have it evaluated by a doctor

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