

# Vancomycin is the drug of choice for treating cellulitis

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Patients admitted to the hospital for the common bacterial skin infection cellulitis should be treated as a first line of defense with the potent antibiotic drug vancomycin rather than other antibiotics such as penicillin, according to a Henry Ford Hospital study.

For some time, medical practice guidelines have been ambiguous about whether vancomycin or so-called B-lactam antibiotics like penicillin or cephalosporins was the more appropriate therapy for treating patients admitted for cellulitis. If left untreated and infection spreads, cellulitis could become life threatening.

The Henry Ford study found that 226 patients treated intravenously with vancomycin between December 2005 and October 2008 fared better and were discharged on average one day earlier than 199 patients treated intravenously with the B-lactam antibiotics.

The study is being presented Oct. 23 at the 48th annual meeting of the [Infectious Diseases](#) Society of America Oct. 21-24 in Vancouver.

"We believe vancomycin is the better treatment option for managing patients hospitalized with cellulitis," says Hiren Pokharna, M.D., an Infectious Diseases fellow at Henry Ford Hospital and the study's lead author.

With MRSA skin and soft tissue infections increasing, researchers sought to compare the two groups of antibiotics commonly used for

treating hospitalized patients with cellulitis. The common bacterial skin infection is caused by many types of bacteria including [staphylococcus](#) and streptococcus. Symptoms include redness, swelling, tenderness and pain.

MRSA strains have proven resistant to common [antibiotics](#) like penicillin and other drugs. However, they have been shown to be susceptible to [vancomycin](#).

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

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