

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is caused by a bacterial infection occurring via a skin defect which can sometimes be very small and difficult to detect. Often horses get limb cellulitis from abrasions and wounds on their legs.

There are numerous bacteria that can cause cellulitis, here is a list of some of the most common:

- Staphylococcus
- Streptococcus
- Escherichia coli
- Enterobacter
- Clostridium

Clinical signs

- Lameness
- Limb swelling which can be hot and painful
- Serous ooze from the area affected
- Horses can also develop a fever from the bacterial infection and become dull, depressed and inappetent

Diagnosis

Your veterinary surgeon will perform a clinical examination to determine the diagnosis and may also perform bacterial culture tests and diagnostic imaging of the limbs

Treatment

- Identify the skin wound/ abrasion and clip and clean thoroughly
- Your veterinary surgeon will prescribe broad spectrum antibiotics to treat the bacterial infection and may alter these to a more specific antibiotic if bacterial culture is performed
- NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) will be given to help reduce swelling and inflammation and make the horse more comfortable
- Gentle exercise may be recommended to help reduce swelling depending on the level of lameness

Prevention

- Ensure the horses environment is as safe as possible, remove anything from the stable or pasture that is sharp or could cause wounds and injury
- Thoroughly check your horses legs every day for any wounds or abrasions