

Necrotizing Fasciitis/Myositis (Flesh-Eating Disease) General Information

What is necrotizing fasciitis and myositis?

Necrotizing fasciitis (NF) is more commonly known as flesh-eating disease. It is a rare illness that causes extensive tissue destruction. NF is caused by a number of different bacteria, one of them being group A *streptococcus* (GAS). Usually GAS spreads through close personal contact and causes mild illness. Sometimes GAS causes serious life-threatening diseases such as flesh-eating disease. Some strains of GAS are more likely to cause severe disease than others.

When the disease spreads along the layers of tissue that surround the muscle (the fascia), it is called necrotizing fasciitis. When the disease spreads into the muscle tissue, it is called necrotizing myositis.

Who can get necrotizing fasciitis?

NF is very rare but may be associated with the person's ability to fight off the infection because of a chronic illness or an illness that affects the immune system. The illness is often related to injury or trauma.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include:

- fever
- severe pain
- red painful swelling that spreads rapidly.

What is the treatment?

NF can be treated with antibiotics and surgical intervention if necessary. Early treatment may reduce the risk of serious complications.

How can you prevent necrotizing fasciitis?

- Use good hand washing practices.
- All wounds should be kept clean and watched for possible signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, drainage, and pain at the wound site.
- Seek medical attention if a wound gets infected.