

Orbital/periorbital cellulitis

Orbital cellulitis

Orbital cellulitis is an infection of the soft tissues of the orbit. This is usually the result of infection in a neighbouring sinus, the ethmoid and the frontal sinuses being the most commonly involved. Less commonly infection may be blood borne or introduced by trauma

Clinical features

The eye is proptosed and both the lids and conjunctiva are inflamed and swollen. Eye movements are limited and painful and there is frequently general malaise and fever. Visual acuity may be reduced.

Management

- Refer to ENT/ophthalmology for admission
- Treatment is with intravenous antibiotics
- CT scan of orbits will be required to differentiate those with an abscess (usually subperiosteal) from those without. Surgical drainage of any abscess will be required to decompress the orbit.

Complications

Increased orbital pressure can cause irreversible loss of vision by obstruction of the optic nerve or retinal blood supply.

Cavernous sinus thrombosis may occur. Usually both eyes are involved and vision is significantly reduced. Mortality for this condition is high.



orbital cellulitis



orbital abscess on CT

Periorbital cellulitis

Periorbital (or preseptal) cellulitis, is an inflammatory oedema of the eyelids and periorbital skin with no involvement of the orbit. Orbital signs (chemosis, proptosis, visual loss) are not present in this condition. The infection may spread posteriorly to produce orbital cellulitis.

Management

- Refer to ENT/ophthalmology for IV antibiotics
- Discuss with ophthalmology if any eye signs and consider diagnosis of orbital cellulitis.



periorbital cellulitis

Flow diagram for management of periorbital and orbital cellulitis

