

Erysipelas is an infection of the upper layers of the skin (superficial). The most common cause is group A streptococcal bacteria, especially *Streptococcus pyogenes*. Erysipelas results in a fiery red rash with raised edges that can easily be distinguished from the skin around it. The affected skin may be warm to the touch. At one time, erysipelas was thought to affect mostly the face, but recent studies suggest that the distribution of the inflammation is changing since at the present time the legs are involved in almost 80% of cases. The rash may also appear on the arms or trunk. Erysipelas is caused by one of several strains of streptococcus bacteria, or less frequently by a staphylococcus infection. Streptococci are involved in about 80% of cases. Erysipelas is a fairly common infection that may affect anyone at any age. It is most common in infants, young children and the elderly, including adults of either sex between ages 60 and 80. The typical erysipelas lesion is so characteristic that its presence is diagnostic.