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Look these up as you need them. The lecture notes and must-memorize points are in the companion Notes PDF.



Key terms

Key terms

Term	Meaning	Pages
Osteomyelitis	Infection involving bone and marrow	p. 3
Septic arthritis	Infection inside a native joint	p. 3
Cellulitis	Infection of skin and subcutaneous tissue	p. 3
Haematogenous	Reaching a site through the bloodstream	p. 8
Contiguous spread	Extension from a nearby infected structure	p. 8
Direct inoculation	Entry through an injury or operative wound	p. 8
Metaphysis	Common childhood long-bone seeding site	p. 8
Necrosis	Tissue death associated with lost blood supply	p. 8
Abscess	A local collection of pus	p. 12
Sinus	A draining tract that can open through the skin	p. 12
Aspiration	Obtaining fluid with a needle	p. 16
Culture	Testing a sample to identify an organism	p. 16
Debridement	Removal of infected or dead tissue	p. 16
Irrigation	Washing out an affected area during surgery	p. 16
Targeted antibiotics	Treatment selected using microbiology results	p. 16
Source control	Addressing pus, damaged tissue, or another focus	p. 16
Native joint	A joint without an artificial replacement	p. 3
Periprosthetic infection	Infection involving a joint replacement	p. 3
Empirical treatment	Initial therapy before the organism is identified	p. 18
Soft-tissue coverage	Viable tissue protecting a reconstructed area	p. 18
Growth disturbance	Altered growth after injury to the growth plate	p. 20
Chronic infection	Persistent infection that may cause recurrent symptoms	p. 20

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Comparison tables

Name the infected compartment

	Osteomyelitis	Septic arthritis	Cellulitis
Site	Bone and marrow	Joint space	Skin and soft tissue
Local clue	Bone tenderness	Painful joint movement	Skin warmth and redness
Sampling focus	Bone or deep tissue	Synovial fluid	Clinical context
Key distinction	Bone involvement	Joint involvement	Superficial tissue involvement

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How infection reaches bone

Route	Starting point	Example context
Bloodstream	A distant infection	Childhood long-bone infection
Adjacent spread	Nearby infected tissue	An ulcer overlying bone
Direct entry	A breach in the skin	Open fracture or surgery

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What each investigation contributes

Investigation	Main question	Remember
Blood tests	Is there systemic inflammation?	Interpret with clinical findings
Imaging	Which structures are involved?	Early X-rays may be normal
Aspiration	What is in this fluid collection?	Sample the relevant compartment
Tissue culture	Which organism is present?	Helps target antibiotic treatment

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Treatment components

Component	Purpose
Antibiotics	Treat the causative organism
Drainage	Remove a collection of pus
Debridement	Remove infected or non-viable tissue
Reconstruction	Restore stability and viable tissue coverage when needed

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