

IMPETIGO

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a contagious skin infection caused by Streptococcus (Strep) or Staphylococcus (Staph) bacteria. The infection occurs when the bacteria get into cuts, scrapes or insect bites. The infection is most commonly seen in children, especially in warm weather.

How is Impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread from person to person through direct contact with the discharge from the sores; for example, when someone touches an impetigo rash and then touches another person. Less commonly, it can be spread through touching articles (such as clothing, bedding, towels, etc.) contaminated with the discharge from the sores.

How is it treated?

If impetigo is suspected, a physician should be contacted for examination, diagnosis, and treatment. A person with impetigo should:

- Keep the infected area clean by washing with soap and water
- Keep the infected area covered loosely with gauze, a non-plastic bandage, or clothing during the day. Allow the sores to dry.
- Wash their hands before touching another part of the body
- Use separate towels and washcloth
- The infection is treated with antibiotics which may be applied to the skin in the form of an ointment or medication taken by mouth, if needed.

How can we prevent Impetigo?

- Wash all cuts, scrapes, and other lesions thoroughly with soap and water to prevent infection from occurring.
- Exclude students with impetigo from school or day care until 24 hours after the start of treatment.

SYMPTOMS OF IMPETIGO

- Clusters of blisters or moist, red bumps (sores) often appearing on the face, around the nose, mouth, and parts of the skin not covered by clothes (arms and legs).
- The sores may ooze or be covered with a honey-colored crust.
- It is often itchy.
- After the bacteria enter the skin, the skin sores develop in 4-10 days.



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