

FACT SHEET

Impetigo

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.

How is it 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, and towels) contaminated with the discharge from the sores.

How is it prevented?

Wash all cuts, scrapes, and other lesions thoroughly with soap and water to prevent infection from occurring. If you have an open wound or infection, avoid hot tubs, swimming pools, lakes, rivers, and oceans.

What are the symptoms?

- 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.
- Itchiness

How is it treated?

The infection is treated with antibiotics which may be applied to the skin in the form of an ointment, or medication taken by mouth.

Exclude students with impetigo from school or day care until 24 hours after the start of treatment.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.