



Impetigo Information

Impetigo is a very contagious skin infection caused by the “staph” or “strep” bacteria. It is very common in young children and sometimes follows a cold or other respiratory illness. Impetigo appears as small red pimples, then fluid-filled blisters with honey-colored scabs/crusts. These are usually found on the face or around the mouth, but may be anywhere on the body. Impetigo can get worse without treatment, so contact your health care provider for any symptoms of impetigo.

How does a person get impetigo?

The bacteria which cause impetigo are present on the skin and nasal secretions of an infected person. Someone can get impetigo either from direct contact with a person with impetigo, or from touching something contaminated with the bacteria. Sometimes the bacteria infect the nose then spread to other parts of the body by scratching. Other times the bacteria enter through an opening in the skin, such as a cut, scratch, or insect bite.

How long does it take to come down with impetigo after a person is exposed?

Sores appear 1-10 days after exposure to the bacteria.

When is a person with impetigo contagious?

A person with impetigo is contagious until treated with antibiotics for 24 hours, or until the skin lesions are no longer present.

How can I help prevent the spread of impetigo?

- Wash hands well and often with soap and water, especially after touching sores or wiping a nose.
- Cover sneezes and put used tissues into a trash can.
- Clean, rinse, and sanitize toys regularly at child care.
- Prevent sharing of unwashed clothing, sheets, washcloths, or towels.
- Wash clothing, sheets, washcloths, and towels of person with impetigo in hot water.
- Keep infected area(s) covered with clothing or bandage(s) while at child care.
- Keep fingernails short (clip at home) to decrease spread by scratching.
- Clean all minor cuts and scrapes with soap and water.
- Bathe regularly with soap and water.

What is the treatment for impetigo?

Impetigo is treated with an antibiotic ointment or an oral antibiotic.

If my child develops impetigo, must s/he stay away from school/ child care?

Yes, until they have been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the nurse at your child’s school or more information may be found at <http://www.medicinenet.com/impetigo/article.htm>

