



Fact Sheet: Impetigo

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used 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.

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a bacterial infection of the skin usually caused by either group A streptococci or *Staphylococcus aureus*. Most common in children ages 2 through 5 years old.

How is it spread?

Impetigo is spread from person-to-person through direct contact with infected skin or other items such as clothing, towels, and bed linens that have been contaminated with the infected secretions. It can also be spread to other parts of the body by scratching the blisters and touching other parts of the body. Group A Strep is very contagious. This infection can rapidly spread among persons in close contact, such as children in a childcare facility or school.

What are the symptoms of impetigo?

Symptoms may appear 7 to 10 days after exposure to streptococcus and 4 to 10 days after exposure to *Staphylococcus aureus*. The rash typically lasts 2-3 weeks. Symptoms can include:

- Red bumps found anywhere on the skin, usually around the nose, mouth, hands and arms
- Thick, golden-yellow pus released from the red bumps that dries, crusts and sticks to the skin forming a crusty, yellow or honey-colored scab

How is impetigo treated?

Doctors may prescribe antibiotic ointment or oral medication.

How is impetigo prevented?

Only preventative measures can help protect yourself and others.

- Avoid contact with known cases of impetigo
- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm running water

- Wash toys, floors and other surfaces where children play with a bleach (1 tablespoon bleach for every 1 gallon of water)
- Clean and care for all wounds properly, seeing a physician for puncture and other deep, serious wounds
- An infected child should stay away from other children until 24 hours after the treatment has begun. The infected area should be covered
- Wash the infected child's clothes, bedding, and towels at least once a day and never share them with other children