



## **Disease Fact Sheet**

## **Impetigo**

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### **What is Impetigo?**

Impetigo is a common bacterial skin infection. The symptoms of impetigo infection are red, round blisters that can be found anywhere on the skin, usually around the nose, mouth, diaper area, hands, and arms. The rash is commonly itchy. These blisters release a thick, golden-yellow pus that dries, crusts, and sticks to the surrounding skin. The rash will usually last 2-3 weeks.

### **What causes Impetigo?**

Impetigo is usually caused by one of two types of bacteria, Group A *Streptococcus*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

### **Is Impetigo serious?**

Usually not. Most infections clear up with medicine from your doctor.

### **Is it contagious?**

Yes. Impetigo is most commonly spread from person to person through direct contact with draining sores. Although not as common, the disease can also be spread from touching other items that are contaminated with the infectious secretions from the rash. Impetigo can be spread as long as there is drainage present. These items include clothing, bedding, towels, etc. This infection can spread rapidly among persons in close contact, such as children in child care, households, and schools.

### **How soon will someone become ill after being infected?**

The usual period of time from infection to the onset of symptoms (the incubation period) is 2-10 days, depending on the type of bacteria causing infections.

### **Who is at risk for Impetigo?**

Impetigo occurs most often in young children. However, it can affect people of any age.

### **Where and when does Impetigo occur?**

Individual cases and outbreaks occur worldwide, and can occur at any time of the year.

### **How is Impetigo treated?**

A doctor can prescribe antibiotic ointment or oral medication to kill the bacteria that causes the rash. You should wear gloves when applying the ointment, and wash your hands afterwards. Infected areas should be washed with mild soap and running water. Encourage the affected person to wash their hands frequently, and to avoid touching or picking at the rash or scabs.

## **Can Impetigo be prevented?**

Preventive measures include:

- Early detection and treatment to control the spread
- Wearing gloves to apply prescribed ointments
- Persons with lesions should avoid contact with newborns
- Lesions should be covered with a dressing or clothing
- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water
- Wash toys, floors, and other surfaces where children may play with a bleach solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 gallon of water that is made fresh each day

## **How should Impetigo be handled at school/childcare?**

Children should be excluded from school/childcare until 24 hours after the start of treatment, and all lesions are dry. The rash should be covered by a dressing or by clothing. Food service workers should be excluded from work until 24 hours after the start of treatment.