

IMPETIGO

Impetigo is an infectious bacterial skin disease and may be a primary infection or a complication of an existing skin condition such as eczema, scabies or insect bites. Impetigo is the most common skin condition in children, particularly during warm weather. Impetigo is usually due to a bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus*. These germs pass from person to person by skin-to-skin contact or, less often, by bedding, clothing and towels. Impetigo can spread rapidly through families and school classes. However, it can also spontaneously appear with no link to where it came from.

What does impetigo look like?

Impetigo can appear - anywhere, but is most common on exposed areas of skin such as the face (around the nose and mouth) and on the hands. It starts as a rash of small, pus-filled blisters. These tend to break easily to leave round oozing patches covered with yellow or brownish crusts. The patches are small at first, but slowly get bigger. Bacteria are easily spread, and new lesions can develop at other sites away from the original infection.



How is impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread by direct contact with discharges from the scabs of an infected person.

The bacteria invade skin through minor abrasions and then spread to other sites by scratching.

Infection is spread mainly on hands, but indirect spread via toys, clothing, equipment and the environment may occur.

The incubation period is between 4 to 10 days.



Treatment

Impetigo is treated with an antibiotic cream, or ointment, onto the patches and the skin around them, two or three times a day, for 7-10 days until they clear up. Antibiotic creams such as mupirocin or fusidic acid will usually be prescribed.

Advice to School/ Nursery staff.

A child should be excluded from school/nursery until lesions are crusted /healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.

Encourage and supervise handwashing for children.

Ensure children do not share eating utensils.

Please contact the Infection control team on **01744 457 314** for further advice support.

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