

Impetigo

Information Sheet

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a skin infection caused by bacteria (streptococcus pyogenes or staphylococcus aureus). It usually affects young children.

What are the symptoms?

Impetigo starts out as a cluster of small blisters that rupture within 24 hours. A golden yellow discharge is produced that dries and crusts over. Common sites are face, arms, buttocks and legs.

How is Impetigo spread?

The infection is spread when someone touches the impetigo blisters and then touches another person.

Is there a treatment?

Yes, Impetigo is treated with antibiotics and/or an antibiotic cream.

What kind of precautions should a person with Impetigo take to prevent spreading it to others?

- Avoid contact with other people until antibiotics have been taken for at least 24 hours.
- Wash hands often.
- Use separate towels and wash cloths from other household members.
- Avoid contact with newborn babies and unwell people.
- Clean and disinfect toys and commonly used items like door-handles, countertops, etc.
- Avoid preparing and handling food until you have been taking antibiotics for 24 hours. In addition, blisters that have not crusted over must be covered.