

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- because you or your child may have been exposed to impetigo.** If you believe your child has developed impetigo, contact your health care provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool if a diagnosis of impetigo is made.
 - for informational purposes only.**
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What is impetigo?

Impetigo is a skin infection caused by bacteria. Two different types of bacteria can cause impetigo: streptococci and staphylococci (staph). The bacteria that cause impetigo can also cause other infections.

What are the symptoms of impetigo?

Impetigo begins as small red spots that progress into tiny blisters. When the blisters open, they produce a thick, honey-colored discharge that dries, crusts, and sticks to the skin. The blisters are painful and itch. Scratching can spread the infection. The infection most often appears on the face, especially around the mouth and the nose, but may also appear on other areas of the body.

How is impetigo spread?

Impetigo is easily spread by direct contact with the fluid from the blisters, or by coming in contact with items contaminated with the bacteria, such as toys, towels, or pillowcases. The bacteria invade the skin through cuts, cold sores, eczema, or other areas of damaged or sensitive skin.

Who is at risk for impetigo?

Impetigo infections often occur in children 2 to 5 years old, but can also affect adults.

How is impetigo diagnosed?

Impetigo is often diagnosed based on the appearance of the sores on the skin. A laboratory culture of the affected area are typically not needed.

How is impetigo treated?

Impetigo may be treated with an antibiotic ointment applied to the skin if there are not many sores. When there are more sores, it may be treated with an oral antibiotic. Contact your health care provider for information on treatment options.

How can the spread of impetigo be reduced?

- Infected areas should be kept covered with clean dressing.
- Always practice frequent and thorough handwashing.
- Individuals with open sores should not prepare food.
- Never allow children in child care to share bedding or clothing.
- Sanitize toys and surfaces using an approved sanitizing solution.
- Keep fingernails short to reduce any damage from scratching.

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Exclude from group setting?

Children and staff with impetigo need to be excluded from child care or school settings until at least a full 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun. Any sores should be kept covered with a bandage until they are fully dry. If an area has drainage and cannot be covered with a bandage, the child should be excluded until the sore is dry.

Reference:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 4th ed.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (website)

- Impetigo: All you need to know Accessed December 2020.

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