

Impetigo

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- Because you or your child may have been exposed to impetigo.
- For informational purposes only.

General Information About Impetigo

What is impetigo?

- It is a common skin infection.
- Two types of bacteria can cause impetigo: group A *streptococcus* (group A strep) and *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Impetigo can occur any time during the year but is most common during warmer weather.

Who can get it?

- Anyone can get impetigo.
- It is most common in children 2 to 5 years old.

What are the symptoms?

- Impetigo begins as small red spots that turn into tiny blisters.
- When the blisters open, they produce a thick, honey-colored discharge that dries, becomes crusty, and sticks to the skin.
- The blisters are painful and itchy.
- Impetigo most often appears on the face, especially around the mouth and the nose.

How is it spread?

- The bacteria that cause impetigo is found in the fluid from the blisters.
- If a person touches the fluid from the blisters and then touches an opening in the skin (from a cut, sore, or cracked skin) with unwashed hands, the bacteria can enter the opening in the skin, multiply, and cause an infection.
 - Scratching can spread the infection.
- The bacteria can also be spread by sharing common household items such as clothing, towels, and bedding.

How Do I Know If My Child Has Impetigo?

A healthcare provider can diagnose impetigo based on the appearance of the sores on the skin.

If you have additional questions or are concerned your child might have impetigo, contact your healthcare provider. This fact sheet provides general information only.

What If My Child Has Impetigo?

Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your child has impetigo.

How is it treated?

- People with impetigo must be seen by a healthcare provider. The healthcare provider will prescribe either an ointment for the blisters or an oral antibiotic.

How can I help prevent impetigo from spreading?

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water.
- People with impetigo should keep blisters and crusted areas covered with clean and dry bandages.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds and bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, clothing, and blankets.
- Wash the clothes, linens, and towels used by the person with impetigo each day.
- Thoroughly clean toys and other objects that children may share with soap and water.
- Clean and sanitize household surfaces.
- Keeping fingernails short can help minimize scratching and scarring. Keeping fingernails clean can help avoid skin infections.

Does My Child Need to Stay Home from Child Care?

Yes. Children with impetigo need to stay home. They can return to child care as long as:

- it's been 24 hours after starting antibiotics;
- and they can keep sores covered;
- and they feel well enough to participate in classroom activities.

Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 6th Edition. pages 123-124

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

- Impetigo: All You Need to Know. <https://www.cdc.gov/groupastrep/diseases-public/impetigo.html>