

IMPETIGO (INFECTED SORES)

DEFINITION

- Sores are less than 1 inch in diameter.
- Sores begin as small red bumps that rapidly change to cloudy blisters, then pimples, and finally sores.
- Sores (any wounds that don't heal) increase in size.
- Sores are often covered by a soft, yellow-brown scab.
- Scabs may be draining pus.
- Impetigo often spreads and increases in number from scratching and picking at the initial sore.
- Any wound that doesn't heal or increases in size usually has become infected.

Cause

Impetigo is a superficial infection of the skin, caused by *Streptococcus* or *Staphylococcus* bacteria. It is more common in the summer when the skin is often broken by cuts, scrapes, and insect bites. When caused by a strep infection of the nose, the impetigo usually first appears near the nose or mouth.

Expected Course

With proper treatment, the skin will be completely healed in 1 week. Some blemishes will remain for 6 to 12 months, but scars are unusual unless your child repeatedly picks her sores.

HOME TREATMENT

Antibiotic (Oral or Injectable). Most children with impetigo need an antibiotic.

Your child's antibiotic is _____. Your child's dosage is _____ given _____ each day for _____ days.

One or two sores following an insect bite or cut may respond to an antibiotic ointment.

Antibiotic Ointment. After the crust has been removed, antibiotic ointment should be applied to the raw surface three times daily. You won't need a prescription. Apply for 7 days or longer if necessary. The area should be washed with an antibacterial soap

each time. Any new crust that forms should not be removed since this delays healing. After applying an antibiotic ointment, cover the sore with a Band-Aid to prevent scratching and spread.

Removing the Scabs. The bacteria live underneath the soft scabs, and until these are removed, the antibiotic ointment has difficulty getting through to the bacteria to kill them. Scabs can be soaked off using warm water and an antibacterial soap. Take your time. The area may need to be gently rubbed, but it should not be scrubbed. A little bleeding is common if you remove all the crust.

Preventing Spread of Impetigo to Other Areas of the Body. Every time your child touches the impetigo and then scratches another part of the skin with that finger, she can start a new site of impetigo. To prevent this, discourage your child from touching or picking at the sores. Keep the fingernails cut short, and wash her hands often with one of the antibacterial soaps.

Contagiousness to Other People. Impetigo is quite contagious. Be certain that other people in the family do not use your child's towel or washcloth. Your child should be kept out of school until she has taken oral antibiotics for 24 hours. For mild impetigo treated with an antibiotic ointment, the child can continue to attend day care or school if the sore is covered with a Band-Aid.



CALL OUR OFFICE

IMMEDIATELY if

- Spreading redness or red streaks occur.
- Your child starts to act very sick.

Within 24 hours if

- The impetigo increases in size and number of sores after 48 hours of treatment.
- A fever or a sore throat occurs.
- The impetigo is not completely healed in 1 week.
- You have other concerns or questions.