

What is impetigo?

- Impetigo is a skin infection.

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What causes it?

- It is caused when bacteria get into open skin.
- Children do not get impetigo because they are dirty.

Who can get it?

- Anyone can get impetigo.
- It is most common in children, especially in the summer months.
- Children with skin injuries (such as a cut or insect bite) or skin problems (such as eczema, poison ivy, or a skin allergy) are at higher risk of getting impetigo.
- Children in school and daycare are at higher risk of getting infected.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- It will cause a skin rash with blisters or red bumps.
- The rash is usually around the nose, mouth, and other parts of the skin not covered with clothes.
- The rash may itch or swell.
- The blisters may leak fluid and then get covered with a light yellow-brown crust.
- The fluid may be clear and then later, cloudy.

Is impetigo contagious?

- Yes. Impetigo is contagious.
- It is spread when someone touches the rash and then touches another person.
- To prevent the spread of infection, wash hands after each time the rash is touched.
- People living with the infected person should wash their hands often.
- Do not share towels, clothes, blankets, and sheets with an infected person.
- Wash these items separately in hot water.
- Children with impetigo should be told not to touch or scratch the rash. This can spread infection from one part of the body to another.
- Keep your child's fingernails short.
- Give your child a daily bath with soap and warm water. Gently clean the skin where it has cuts and rashes.
- Cover cuts and rashes with clothing or a bandage if possible.

How is it treated?

- Impetigo can be treated with antibiotics.
- Antibiotics may be taken by injection (shot), oral medicine (by mouth), or cream. Ask your doctor.
- Your child must take all of her medicine to make sure the infection is cured.
- Wash the infected skin with soap and warm water twice a day.
- Soak parts of the skin that are crusted in warm, soapy water. Gently brush off crust that is easily removed. Do not force off. Not all crust needs to be removed.
- Cover infected skin with bandages if possible.

How long does it last?

- Your child can return to school or daycare when she is no longer contagious.
- This is usually 24 hours after treatment is started.

- With antibiotics, the skin usually begins to heal in 2 to 3 days.

When should I call the doctor?

- Call if your child has symptoms of impetigo, especially if someone in your child's class or house has impetigo.
- Call if your child's rash does not begin to heal after 3 days of treatment.
- Call if your child gets a fever with her rash.
- Call if your child's skin is red, warm, and hurts when touched.
- Call if you have questions or concerns about your child's treatment or condition.

Quick Answers

- Impetigo is a skin infection.
- It is caused when bacteria get into open skin.
- It is most common in children, especially in the summer months.
- It will cause a skin rash with blisters or red bumps, usually around the nose or mouth.
- It is spread when someone touches the rash and then touches another person.
- Impetigo can be treated with antibiotics.
- With antibiotics, the skin usually begins to heal in 2 to 3 days.
- Call the doctor if your child's rash does not begin to heal after 3 days of treatment.

References

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