

# 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.**

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### References

American Academy of Pediatrics

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

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

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