FACTSHEET

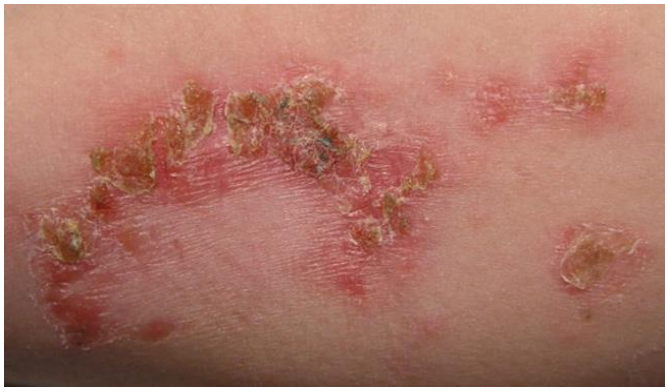
Impetigo

What is impetigo?

Impetigo, sometimes called "school sores" is a bacterial infection of the skin. The main cause is strains of bacteria called Streptococcus pyogenes (known as 'group A strep') and Staphylococcus aureus (known as 'staph').

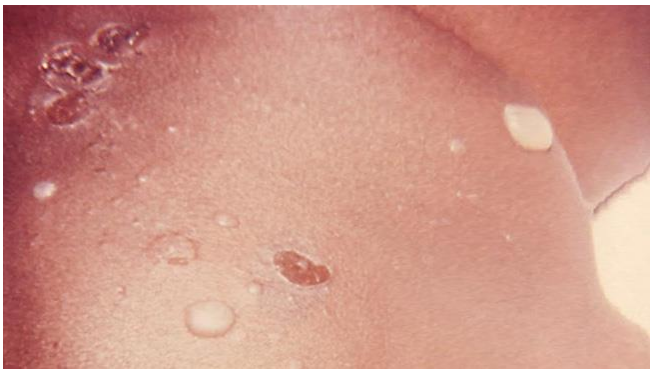
What does it look like?

Impetigo occurs in two forms, blistering and crusted.



Crusted Impetigo

Crusted impetigo has a thick soft yellow crust. Below this crust is a wet red area. Crusted impetigo spots grow slowly and are always smaller than the fully grown spots of blistering impetigo. They are not usually painful but can be itchy.



Blistering Impetigo

In blistering impetigo the blisters grow quickly in size and number. The blisters quickly burst and leave slightly wet or shiny areas with a brown crust at the edge. The spots grow quickly even after they break open and can be many centimetres wide. They sometimes have a ring shaped pattern. They are not usually painful but can be itchy.

How is it spread?

Impetigo can occur on top of other skin problems, particularly itchy ones. When the skin is 'scratched', the infection can enter through the broken skin. Some of these problems are atopic dermatitis (eczema), scabies, insect bites and head lice.

A sore can be infectious for as long as it is weeping. The fluid and crusts of the sore contain the bacteria. Help

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your child and family to wash their hands often, especially after touching the sores.

Contact with the sore or things that have been on the sore can spread the infection to other people. To stop the spread don't share clothes, towels, bed linen, nail scissors, tweezers, razors or toothbrushes.

Impetigo is very easy to catch from other people. Cover sores with a band aid or plaster. If possible, your child should be kept away from other children and school until 24 hours after starting treatment.

How is it treated?

A child with impetigo needs to be checked by a Doctor as it may need to be treated with antibiotics. Your doctor will take a swab for testing that will help prescribe the right antibiotic. The result of the swab takes 2 days.

If your child starts on antibiotic medicine it is important to finish the whole course of treatment. The treatment should continue until ALL sores are healed. If the treatment has finished and sores are still present, see your Doctor.

If other family members have skin spots they should also be treated. After bathing, the crusts of the sores can be wiped off with a clean disposable wet cloth and then cover the sores with a water tight dressing to stop them from being scratched. Make sure that your hands are washed after touching the area.

Reducing the spread

- A daily bath or shower may reduce the risk. Use a new clean towel each day.
- Good hygiene that includes regular hand washing.
- Cut your child's finger nails and keep them clean.
- Wash your child's clothes and bed linen separately from the rest of the family. Wash affected clothes in hot water and dry in sun or in dryer on hot cycle. Toys can be washed or wiped with a mild ~~disinfectant .~~ disinfectant.

Remember:

- Impetigo is very easy to catch from other people
- If prescribed antibiotics it is important to finish the whole course to make sure the impetigo will not come back.
- Cover the sores with a water tight dressing.