

IMPETIGO

Impetigo is a contagious skin infection often occurring on the nose, arms, legs, or around the mouth. This infection is common in young children.

CAUSE: *Streptococcus* and/or *Staphylococcus* bacteria. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* has also been identified as a cause.

SYMPTOMS: Typically begins at a break in the skin (e.g., insect bite, cut, etc.). Sores form on the skin and produce a thick golden-yellow discharge that dries, crusts, and sticks to the skin.

Rarely, problems such as kidney disease or cellulitis (skin infection) may develop if children do not receive proper treatment.

SPREAD: From person to person through touching the fluid from the sores. Rarely, through touching contaminated objects.

INCUBATION: It usually takes 1 to 10 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms begin.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD: Until sores are healed or the person has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

EXCLUSION: Until treated with antibiotics for 24 hours and sores are drying or improving.

DIAGNOSIS: Call your healthcare provider if you think your child has impetigo.

TREATMENT: Impetigo can be treated with topical antibiotics (applied directly to the skin) when only a few sores are present. When there are more than a few sores, your healthcare provider may prescribe oral (by mouth) or injectable (shot into the muscle) antibiotics.

PREVENTION/CONTROL:

1. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with sores. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.**
2. Wear gloves if applying ointment to sores or use cotton-tipped swabs.
3. Cover sores as a barrier to prevent spread, whenever possible. Discourage children from scratching infected areas.
4. DO NOT share towels, washcloths, or clothing.
5. Clean and disinfect toys at least daily and when soiled.

For more information, you or your healthcare provider may call Hennepin County Community Health Department at (952) 351-5230, or call your local health department.

Prepared by Hennepin County Community Health Department with the support of the local and state disease prevention and control staff and childcare consultants.