



Impetigo

What is impetigo?

Impetigo is a skin infection that is caused by bacteria (streptococcus or staphylococcus) and is easily spread from person to person. It is common in children ages 2 to 6 years old. Impetigo can usually be recognized by a blistering rash. The infection can develop at the site of other skin problems like eczema, poison ivy, allergies, an insect bite, a scrape or other area of broken skin.

What are the symptoms of impetigo?

- First, red or pimple-like sores surrounded by red skin will appear.
- Second, the sores fill with pus and break open leaking golden yellow fluid.
- Next, crusty scabs form over the blistered area.
- At all stages, the sores will be itchy.

How is impetigo treated?

An antibiotic is usually prescribed by a health care provider. This medicine is typically given by mouth, but it can also be a topical (on the skin) antibiotic ointment. Caregivers should avoid contact with the rash by wearing gloves, especially if applying ointment. If contact does occur, the caregiver should wash her hands immediately.

Other tips for reducing the spread of impetigo include:

- Keep child's fingernails cut short.
- Avoid scratching any rash, bug bites or scrapes.
- Use separate towels, washcloths, sheets and pillows for the infected person.
- Clean and disinfect toys.
- Cover the infected area with gauze and tape or loose plastic bandage.
- Bathe with soap and water regularly.
- Wash hands often.

School/Child Care Precautions:

A child with impetigo should be excluded from school/child care until he has completed 24 hours of medication.

For more information contact Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Division at (336) 641-7777 or www.myguilford.com