

Impetigo

Information leaflet for parents

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a very contagious skin infection most commonly seen in young children. It's usually not serious and resolves within 7 to 10 days if treated. Symptoms include:

- Rash that can itch or become sore
- Oozing blisters that later form crusts
- Crusts can get bigger or spread to other parts of the body



What causes Impetigo?

It's caused by bacteria, most frequently *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Streptococcus pyogenes*. Broken skin or dry skin due to eczema are susceptible to develop an infection. Impetigo can be passed on by touching fluid from the blister which is very infectious. Pregnancy does not create any more risks for mum and impetigo is unlikely to cause harm to the unborn baby.

How will I be treated for Impetigo?

Normally, a doctor will diagnose impetigo by its appearance and may take swabs. If the infection is mild, it may heal on its own by

keeping the skin clean. The doctor may prescribe an antibiotic cream or oral antibiotics (suitable during pregnancy).

The affected areas should be washed with soapy water to remove crusts and fluid before applying the cream. You should complete the treatment even if the impetigo starts to clear up.

How can I prevent Impetigo spreading?

- Close attention to personal hygiene and hand washing after touching affected areas is important to prevent transmission.
- Avoid touching or scratching the crusts.
- keep fingernails short.
- Keep blisters and crusts clean, dry and cover them with a gauze or loose clothing.
- Avoid sharing towels and face cloths until the infection is gone.

Impetigo stops being contagious when the patches dry out and crust over and at least 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.

Impetigo usually infects skin that is already damaged, so keeping cuts, scratches and insect bites clean will reduce the risk. Also getting treatment for dry skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis will reduce the risk of infection.