

## Infections - bacterial



# Impetigo (School Sores)

## Important Points

- Impetigo is a bacterial infection of the surface of the skin
- Impetigo commonly occurs on the face, arms or legs
- Impetigo is infectious and can spread from one member of the family to another and from one school child to another
- Impetigo is treated with antiseptic solutions to the skin. Oral antibiotics taken by mouth or antibiotic creams applied to the skin may also be needed

## What is it?

Impetigo is a bacterial infection of the skin that causes crusting, weeping and occasionally blistering on the surface of the skin. It comes up over several days on areas of the skin such as the face or the limbs. It can sometimes spread onto the trunk.

It is highly infectious and can spread from one member of the family to another or can spread between children at school, hence the name "school sores".

The infection does not normally cause any symptoms and does not lead to scarring. It can occur occasionally on top of a skin condition such as eczema. This may cause the eczema to become worse with weeping and yellow crusting.

## How is it treated?

Impetigo may start after scratching an insect bite or from other slight breaks in the skin. To prevent this, antiseptics should be applied to cuts or scratches.

Washing the infected skin with antiseptic solution and applying an antiseptic cream, prescribed by a doctor, can treat very mild impetigo. If the infection is more widespread, the doctor may prescribe oral (by mouth) antibiotics to be used with the antiseptics.

Children with impetigo should be kept away from other children. Twenty-four hours after oral antibiotics therapy has been started the child should no longer be infectious and able to spread it to others.

**Further Information**

Your Maternal and Child Health nurse.

Your pharmacist.

Your family doctor.

A dermatologist.

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