



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

IMPETIGO

What is the impetigo?

It is a skin infection caused by certain bacteria (streptococci and/or staphylococci bacteria).

How is impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread by direct contact with fluid from the rash; it is spread most often by the hands. To help prevent the spread of impetigo:

- The person with the rash should not share towels, washcloths, bedding, clothing, or eating utensils with other household members.
- Good hand washing is very important.
- The person with the rash should not go to school/daycare or do any food handling until treatment has been started and the rash is dry and there is no drainage.

What are the possible symptoms of impetigo?

Impetigo is most common on the face, around the mouth and nose, but it can be found anywhere on the body including the scalp. Symptoms include a red, round pimple-like rash. The pimples may contain yellow-colored pus.

How is impetigo diagnosed?

A doctor can usually diagnose impetigo just by looking at the rash. Sometimes a cotton swab is used to take a sample of the pus from the pimples to check for a specific type of bacteria.

What is the treatment for impetigo?

The rash should be washed with soap and a clean wash cloth 3-4 times a day. Apply antibiotic cream (such as bacitracin or mycitracin) after each washing. You may put a Band-Aid over the cream if clothing will remove the cream or if the child is unable to keep from touching the area. Some cases do not improve with the above treatment and may require an antibiotic from a physician.

For more information on impetigo:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org