

IMPETIGO

(Pyoderma)

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE

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BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A common bacterial skin infection that affects the top layers of the skin. It usually involves the skin of the face, arms, and legs. Impetigo can affect all ages, but it is most common in infants and children.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- A localized (not spreading) red rash with many small blisters. Some blisters contain pus, and yellow crusts form when they break. The blisters don't hurt, but they may itch.
- Slight fever (sometimes).

CAUSES

Staphylococcal or streptococcal (or both) bacteria growing in the upper skin layers. It is usually spread from person-to-person, or from germs on something an infected person has touched. The time from exposure to the germs and the start of symptoms is 1 to 3 days. A person is contagious when the rash is crusting or oozing pus.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Contact with an infected person.
- Skin that is sensitive to sun and irritants, such as soap and makeup.
- Other skin problems, such as bites, burns, infections, sores, or injuries.
- Poor general health.
- Warm, moist weather.
- Children in daycare.
- Poor hygiene.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- No specific preventive measures.
- Maintain good general health and good hygiene.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Curable in 7 to 10 days with treatment. It may recur in children.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Can lead to other skin conditions and scarring (rare).
- Kidney disorder (rare).



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider can diagnose impetigo by an exam of the infected skin. Medical skin tests are usually not needed.
- Treatment is with drugs used for bacterial infection.
- Self-care steps include:
 - Keep fingernails short. Don't scratch the blisters.
 - If there is an outbreak in the family, urge all members to use antibacterial soap. Wash hands carefully.
 - Use separate towels for each family member, or substitute paper towels temporarily.
 - Don't share razors with other people.
 - Scrub sores with gauze and antiseptic soap. Break any pustules. Remove all crusts, and expose and cleanse all lesions. If crusts are difficult to remove, soak them in warm, soapy water and scrub gently.
 - Cover impetigo sores with gauze and tape to keep hands away from them.
 - Men should shave around sores on the face, not over them. Use an aerosol shaving cream and change razor blades each day. Don't use a shaving brush; it may have germs on it.

MEDICATIONS

- Antibiotic ointments may be prescribed.
- Oral antibiotics may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY

No limits.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or your child has symptoms of impetigo.
- Fever occurs.
- The sores continue to spread or don't begin to heal in 3 days, despite treatment.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page