

# Impetigo

Impetigo is a bacterial skin infection that occurs when the skin has been injured by a scrape or insect bite and most often occurs in the summer.

## What are the symptoms of impetigo?

Infection occurs primarily around the mouth or nose, or on exposed skin of the face or limbs as a cluster of red bumps or blisters, which may then ooze a clear or yellow fluid or become covered by an itchy honey-coloured crust. The infection is usually accompanied by fever, pain, general weakness and swelling.

## How is impetigo spread?

The infection is spread by direct and indirect contact with infected, draining sores. Impetigo can be spread from one part of the body to another by scratching with contaminated fingers. It can also be spread on bed linens, towels or clothing that has been in contact with infected skin. Keeping sores covered helps to prevent the spread of infection.

## How long is impetigo contagious?

It is contagious as long as the sores continue to drain fluid.

## How is impetigo treated?

The infection is treated with antibiotics, either oral or applied as an ointment to the skin.

## More to know

- Having impetigo is not linked to uncleanliness.
- Impetigo often affects school-aged children who are in crowded conditions, play contact sports, or have other skin problems or irritations.
- A doctor usually diagnoses impetigo by sight. However, a skin swab may be used to identify the type of bacteria that caused the infection, but this test usually isn't necessary.
- Children may return to school after treatment with antibiotics for at least 24 hours.
- Proper hand hygiene is very important to prevent the spread of the infection



**Northwestern  
Health Unit**

[www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca)