



# Impetigo

## Patient and Family Education

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**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Your child's doctor or a member of your child's health care team will talk with you about specific care for your child.**

### **What is impetigo?**

Impetigo is a skin infection that can occur when there is a break in the skin. It is common in summer and is caused by germs on the skin such as staph or strep. It often appears below the nose, around the mouth and ears or on the buttocks.

- It looks like blisters or golden colored scabs.
- It can spread to other parts of the body or to other people easily.
- It spreads mostly into areas of broken skin such as sores, scratches, insect bites and chickenpox.
- It needs to be treated to prevent the infection from spreading.

### **What are the possible symptoms?**

Your child may have one or more of these:

- Golden (honey-colored), crusty sores or blister-like sores
- Pus draining from the skin
- Swollen glands

### **What is the treatment?**

Some general guidelines to follow include:

- Apply ointment or cream to the sores as directed by your child's doctor.
- Give any medicines by mouth as directed by your child's doctor.
- Soak the crusts off but do not scrub or rub the sores.
- Wash your hands and your child's hands often.
- Keep your child's fingernails short and clean to stop spreading of the infection.
- Cover the sores when your child has contact with others. Also cover them if your child picks or scratches the sores.
- Keep your family's towels, washcloths and bed sheets separate from your child's. This helps to prevent the infection from spreading to others.
- Avoid contact sports as advised by your child's doctor.

### **When should I call the doctor?**

Call your child's doctor if:

- The sores have not started to heal after three days of treatment
- He develops a temperature over 100.3°F

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

## **Impetigo, continued**

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- You see signs of cellulitis (deeper skin infection) or an abscess such as:
  - Increasing redness or swelling
  - Red streaks or lines that move away from the sores
  - Increased pain
  - Affected area feels hot
- Blood in the urine or brown-colored urine
- Less urine output than normal
- Does not smile or show interest in playing for at least a few minutes during any four-hour period

With proper treatment, the skin should heal in 10 to 14 days. Some discolored areas (not open sores) may remain for six to 12 months. Scars are unusual unless your child picks his sores a lot.

Also call your child's doctor if you have questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

### **When can my child return to daycare or school?**

Your child can return after he has been on antibiotics at least 24 hours.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**