

# Impetigo

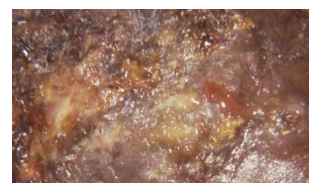
## What is impetigo?

- Impetigo is a highly contagious, common skin infection caused by streptococcus (strep) or staphylococcus aureus (staph) bacteria.
- Impetigo usually does not penetrate intact skin. When you have breaks in the skin, i.e., bites, burns, or wounds, the bacteria enters the body and causes the infection.



## What are the symptoms?

- Rash found anywhere on the skin, but most often on the face, lips, arms, or legs that spread to other areas.
- One or more blisters filled with pus, which are easy to pop.
- Itchy blisters filled with yellow or honey-colored fluid, which ooze and crust over.
- In infants, the skin is reddish or raw-looking where a blister has broken.



## How does impetigo spread?

- Person-to-person: Open skin area has direct contact with the fluid that oozes from an impetigo blister.
- Contaminated articles-to-person: Open skin area is in contact with contaminated articles (such as bedding, towels, wash cloths, etc.).

## How is impetigo treated?

- Your doctor will prescribe an antibacterial cream and possibly oral antibiotics.
- Wear gloves while applying the ointment and wash your hands (soap with running water for 20 seconds) afterwards.
- Wash the skin several times a day with antibacterial soap to remove crusts and drainage.
- Without proper treatment complications such as kidney damage or failure can occur.
- Children with impetigo should not return to school or day care until 24 hours after beginning antibacterial treatment or cleared by a healthcare provider.

## How do I prevent the spread of impetigo?

- Do not share towels, clothing, razors, or other personal care products with others.
- If you have impetigo, always use a clean washcloth and towel each time you wash.
- Avoid touching oozing blisters.
- Avoid contact with newborn babies who are at a higher risk of being infected.
- Keep blisters loosely covered to minimize the spread of infection.
- Wash your hands (soap with running water for 20 seconds) after touching infected skin.



## Where can I find more information?

- Go to [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) and type impetigo in SEARCH box.



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800-338-8374 [www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases) 11/01/2017