

Impetigo

Impetigo is a mild but highly contagious bacterial skin infection that usually causes blisters or sores it can affect anyone but is most common in infants and young children. It is generally caused by one of two bacteria staphylococcus aureus or streptococcus. Incubation period is one to ten days.

The condition usually spreads through direct contact with an infected person, or by the following routes:

- Direct contact with fluid from the blisters
- Indirect contact- by touching articles that are freshly soiled with the blister fluid, e.g. cloths, towels, toys and surfaces.

Symptoms may include:

- Impetigo may affect the skin anywhere on the body but commonly occurs around the nose, mouth, hands and forearms and diaper area in young children.
- Impetigo usually begins as small, reddish spots which soon develop into blisters which burst and leave raw weeping areas; these dry out in 4-6 days, and leave a characteristic yellow, brown crust.
- Impetigo blisters are not usually painful but may itch.
- Swollen glands and fever are rare but may occur in severe cases.



Treatment

- Impetigo needs to be diagnosed by a doctor
- When it affects a small area of skin it can be treated by applying an antibiotic ointment.
- In more severe cases oral antibiotics should be prescribed.
- Gently wash the areas of infected skin with soap and water to remove the crusts it is important that the crusts are washed away before applying the ointment.

Prevention

- Good hand hygiene is the most important and effective way of preventing spread of the infection.
- Prompt treatment of suspected or confirmed cases.

If your child has impetigo, please inform the nursery and keep them at home until the sores have dried up, crusted over or until 48 hours after starting treatment. If the sores can be covered please cover during Nursery time.

For further information and advice please contact the Nursing Team.