

Impetigo (school sores)

Description

Impetigo (school sores) is a common bacterial skin condition.

School sores start from a break in the skin through an insect bite, cut or graze. If the sore is not treated it will cause further skin problems.

- The sores can be anywhere on the body but most often occur on the face (near the mouth and nose), hands, arms or legs.
- The sore starts with a blister or a group of blisters.
- The blister bursts leaving a patch of red, wet skin which weeps or oozes. The blister will develop a tan/yellowish crust. Once blisters are crusted and turn into sores they become itchy.
- The sore will grow larger each day.
- There can be smaller spots around the first sore, spreading outwards.

How does it spread?

School sores are spread through contact with the blisters, fluid from the blister or scratching around the sore.

- Once you touch any part of the sore it is easily spread to others by then touching others, clothing, bedding, surfaces i.e. a chair and toys.
- It spreads on yourself by touching the blister or fluid and then touching other parts of your body.

The period of time it takes for this illness to develop is between one to ten days.

Infectious period

People are infectious for as long as there is fluid weeping from the sores. They are no longer infectious when the sores have healed or 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.

Exclusion period

Impetigo is very infectious, it is important that other children are protected from contact with the sores.

Children with impetigo are no longer infectious 24 hours (e.g. 3pm to 3pm) after starting antibiotic treatment, or when the sores have healed.

If the sores cannot be scratched or any contact made with blister fluid, for example bandaged and under clothing, then the child can return to their early childhood centre.

Responsibilities of staff

- Ask the parent to keep their child at home until they have had antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours, or until the sores are dry.
- Make sure staff and children wash hands often with soap and warm water and are thoroughly dried.
- If you need to cover or re-cover a school sore use a waterproof plaster. All used plasters must go in a bin as soon as they are removed.

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Responsibilities of parents

People who live together are most likely to be infected unless:

- You take your child to the doctor as soon as you think it is a school sore.
- Everyone in the home is washing their hands with soap.
- And, most importantly, the child should not share clothes, towels, flannels or bedding with anyone in the home.

Treatment

A doctor may recommend the use of antibiotic ointment, or antibiotics taken by mouth. The child should go back to their doctor if the condition does not improve.