

Impetigo – Advice for Parents

What is it?

Impetigo is a skin infection caused by *staphylococcus aureus* or *streptococcus pyogenes* bacteria.

How is it spread?

Impetigo spreads from person to person mainly by direct contact with the infected skin or the hands of those with the infection. On rare occasions it may also be caught from objects that have been used by those with impetigo such as clothes and towels.

What are the symptoms?

Impetigo appears as a flat, yellow, crusty or weeping patch on the skin. Those with impetigo do not usually feel unwell.

How can it be prevented?

Regular hand washing using soap and hot water followed by thorough drying of hands is the most important way in which impetigo can be prevented. This is very important in those who are in close contact with someone with impetigo.

Impetigo needs to be treated with antibiotics which will help the skin to heal and will help prevent other people from catching it. Children with impetigo also need to be kept especially clean. The infected skin area should be washed with mild soap and water, their hands should be washed frequently and their clothes and towels should be changed daily. Those with impetigo should use their own towel which should be kept aside for **their own use only and not shared with others.**

Exclusion

All pupils with impetigo should be kept away from school until their skin has healed or until 24 hours after antibiotics treatment has begun. Those coming into contact with someone with impetigo do not require any treatment and do not need to stay away from school or work.