

What about staying away from school or preschool?

Yes — until at least 24 hours after treatment has started, or as advised by your doctor or Public Health Nurse.

Do you require further information?

For further information contact:

- Your local doctor or practice nurse
- Your local Public Health Nurse
- Communicable Diseases at Community and Public Health



Other resources available on childhood infections:

- Rotavirus
- Measles
- Hand, foot and mouth disease
- Ringworm
- Slapped cheek disease
- Conjunctivitis
- Threadworms

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**Communicable Diseases
Community and Public Health**
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Impetigo (School sores)



Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo, often called **school sores**, is a crusty, weepy infection of the superficial layers of the skin.

It usually begins on the face or on the exposed parts of the arms or legs, where the skin is broken.

It is caused by bacteria commonly found in the environment and is common in children, especially in the spring and autumn.

What are the symptoms?

The appearance of small blisters or scabs on the exposed parts of the body, which form yellow crusts. They often start around the nose and on the face, and can spread to other parts of the body

Symptoms usually appear 7-10 days after becoming infected.

How is it caught?

Impetigo is contagious, and is transferred by direct contact with an infected individual, or from infected towels, toys and clothes.

It is important to prevent an infected person from scratching the sores as this will spread the infection.

Do we need to see a doctor?

Yes — only your doctor can give you the medication and the supervision required so that the treatment can be adjusted if the condition does not clear quickly.

If the sores remain untreated they can lead onto more serious conditions.

How is it treated?

Your doctor may prescribe one or both of the following treatments:

- Oral antibiotics (usually Penicillin)
- An antibiotic ointment applied to the affected area for ten days

The oral antibiotics must be taken for at least ten days even if the lesions clear earlier.

When ointment alone is prescribed, the crusts should be removed with warm saline made by mixing one teaspoon of salt in 600 ml of boiled water that has been cooled.

How is spread prevented?

The person's towel and face cloth should be kept separate.

An antibacterial soap can be helpful. Your Doctor, Practice Nurse and/or Public Health Nurse can advise you on the management of impetigo.

Weeping sores should be kept covered with a non-stick dressing to prevent further spread.

Wash hands thoroughly after changing dressings or after coming into contact with infected sores/items.

It is important not to scratch the sores



The crusts and blisters will not cause scars as they are present on the upper layer of the skin. However, the infected areas of skin will remain red for a while but will eventually fade.