

Self Care - Impetigo

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a highly contagious infection of the surface layers of the skin, which causes sores and blisters. The sores are not usually painful, but they may be itchy.

How long does it last?

Impetigo is not usually a serious condition. Most people are no longer contagious after 48 hours of treatment, or once their sores have dried and healed. Without treatment impetigo will usually clear up after two to three weeks. However, if you or your child has symptoms, you should visit your Doctor to rule out the possibility of other, more serious infections.

Treatment

If impetigo is confirmed, it can usually be treated with antibiotics which may be prescribed in the form of a cream (topical) or as tablets. With treatment, the infection should clear up after about 7 to 10 days.

To prevent the spread of infection to others:

- Keep children off nursery, playgroup or school until their sores have crusted over, or until 48 hours after starting treatment
- Cover any cuts and grazes on non-infected people with a plaster or dressing
- It is important not to try not to touch or scratch the sores, because this can spread the infection to other parts of your body, and to other people
- Wash your hands frequently, particularly if you have touched infected skin
- Avoid contact with newborn babies until the rash has crusted over, or after at least 48 hours of treatment with antibiotics
- Do not share clothing, flannels, sheets or towels with infected people, and wash them at a high temperature after use
- Washable toys should also be washed. Wipe non-washable soft toys thoroughly with a cloth that has been wrung out in detergent and warm water and allow to dry completely.

Source NHS choices

If you would like further advice contact NHS Direct on 08454647 or see www.nhs.uk



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