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What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a skin infection usually caused by one of two types of bacteria, group A streptococci or *Staphylococcus aureus*.

What are the symptoms of Impetigo?

Impetigo appears as a blistery rash. When the blisters open, they produce a thick, golden-yellow discharge that dries, crusts, and adheres to the skin. It commonly occurs on the face or diaper area but can occur anywhere on the body.

How is Impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread from person to person through direct contact with the discharge from the blisters. This infection can rapidly spread among persons in close contact, such as children in a daycare facility. There is risk of spread by touching items contaminated with drainage from the blisters such as towels, washcloths, etc.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear within four to ten days after contact with someone who has Impetigo.

Who gets Impetigo?

It is most common in children; however, Impetigo can occur in individuals of any age.

Should a child with Impetigo be excluded from child-care or school?

A child with Impetigo should be excluded from child-care or school until there is no drainage from the blister rash, and if treated with oral antibiotics until 24 hours after treatment was started.

Infected areas should be washed with mild soap and running water. Wash the infected individual's clothes, linens, and towels at least once a day and never share them with others. Do not bathe a child with Impetigo with another child.

Wear gloves while applying any antibiotic ointment that a physician may recommend, and wash your hands afterwards. (Antibiotics taken by mouth may also be prescribed.)

Want more information?

Information about Impetigo and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call (202) 442-9371.

