

# Impetigo Fact Sheet

## **Impetigo is a common skin infection in young children**

It is caused by streptococcal or staphylococcal bacteria. Although common in children, impetigo can occur in people of any age.

## **A rash appears 4 to 10 days after exposure**

The rash looks red and round, and may be oozing. It can occur as small blisters containing pus-like material that may break and form a flat, honey-colored crust. The rash is most commonly seen on the face and diaper area, but can occur any place on the skin. The rash is often itchy.

## **Impetigo is spread through direct contact with infected skin**

Less commonly it can be spread through touching articles (such as clothing, bedding, towels, etc.) contaminated by contact with the rash.

## **Treatment is available**

Topical treatments and/or antibiotics are available to treat impetigo. See your doctor. Untreated streptococcal impetigo may result in a complication called nephritis. Nephritis is a serious and possibly deadly kidney disease, which may be prevented by antibiotics.

## **A person with impetigo should:**

- Wash the rash with soap and water and cover it loosely with gauze, a bandage, or clothing.
- Wash hands thoroughly, especially after touching an infected area of the body.
- Use separate towels and washcloths.
- Avoid contact with newborn babies.
- Be excluded from school or child care until 24 hours after the start of treatment.
- Be excluded from food handling until 24 hours after the start of treatment.