

## Should the child stay home from school?

No — if the infection is mild and is treated properly, and exposed sores are adequately covered with a non stick dressing.

Yes — if the infection is more severe. In these cases antibiotics (e.g. penicillin) need to have been taken for at least 24 hours at home before being allowed back to school.

## 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
- Orf Virus disease
- 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 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 (germs) commonly found in the environment and is common in school children, especially in the spring and autumn.

## What are the symptoms?

The appearance of scabby sores on the exposed parts of the body.

Symptoms usually appear 7-10 days after becoming infected.

It can spread readily to other parts of the body and to other children or family members.

## How is it caught?

The fluid in the sores is infectious, and the infection spreads from the original sore to other parts of the body where the skin is scratched or broken, as with itchy skin conditions such as eczema.

It is spread to others by exposure to the fluid from the sores by:

- Direct skin contact
- Contact with infected towels, sponges or face-cloths
- Frequently handled playthings and utensils that are infected

## How is it treated?

Your doctor may prescribe either antibiotics, usually Penicillin taken by mouth or an antibiotic ointment applied to the affected area for ten days, or both.

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.

Penicillin must be taken for at least ten days even if the lesions clear earlier.

## Do we need to see the 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 spread prevented?

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

An antibacterial soap can be helpful. Your Doctor, Practice Nurse and 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.

