

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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Impetigo

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a highly contagious bacterial skin infection. The draining sores usually appear on the exposed areas of the body such as the face, hands and lower extremities.

Who can get Impetigo?

Anyone coming in contact with the draining sores is at risk. Newborns, the elderly and individuals with chronic illnesses are more susceptible to infections than others.

What are the symptoms of Impetigo?

Open sores draining pus like fluid on the skin are commonly seen. These sores may spread to surrounding skin and other areas of the body.

How is Impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread by contact with the draining sores on the skin.

How long is a person contagious?

As long as sores are draining. A person is no longer contagious 24 – 48 hours after antibiotic treatment begins.

What are the complications of Impetigo?

The infection may spread beyond the skin in unusual circumstances.

How is Impetigo treated?

Topical treatments and/or oral antibiotics are available. See your health care provider. Keep children home from school for 24 hours after therapy is started or until sores are healing and no new sores appear.

How can Impetigo be prevented?

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water.
2. Wash open cuts or sores with soap and water.
3. Do not touch or scratch sores.
4. Cut finger nails short.
5. Cover affected area with gauze, a bandage or clothing.
6. Do not share personal items (i.e., combs and brush, towels, wash cloth).
7. Stay out of non-chlorinated pools.
8. Avoid all contact with people, animals or objects that may have been exposed.

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HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:

- use soap and running water
- rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- wash all surfaces, including:
 - backs of hands
 - wrists
 - between fingers
 - under fingernails
- rinse well
- dry hands with a paper towel
- turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands

For more information on Impetigo, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health.