

School Sores (Impetigo)

This is a superficial skin infection caused by *Staphylococcus* or *Streptococcus* bacteria, or sometimes both, most common in children.

Impetigo appears as a flat, yellow, crusty or moist patch on the skin, usually on exposed parts of the body such as the face and legs. The sores are often greater than 1 cm in diameter (colour plate no. 9).

Diagnosis is based on clinical examination. Dry, cracked skin serves as an area for growth of the *Streptococcus* and *Staphylococcus* bacteria. The bacteria can easily spread to other parts of the infected person's body or to other people directly by contact with sores or indirectly by contact with contaminated clothes.

Incubation period

(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)

4 – 10 days.

Infectious period

(time during which an infected person can infect others)

As long as there is discharge from the sores. School sores are extremely contagious.

Treatment

The doctor may recommend the use of antibiotic ointment, or antibiotics by mouth in severe cases.

Any sores on exposed surfaces should be covered with a watertight dressing.

Control of spread

- > Persons with school sores should be excluded from child care, preschool, school and work until appropriate treatment has commenced. Any sores on exposed surfaces should be completely covered with a dressing.
- > Good hand washing procedures should be encouraged.

- > **Hand Hygiene**