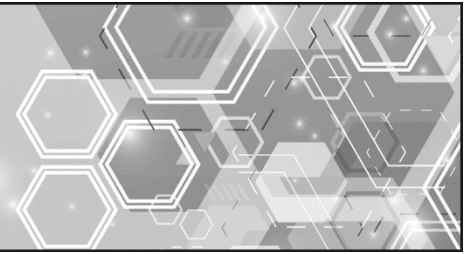




Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Impetigo

What is it?

Impetigo is an infection of the skin, commonly found around the mouth, the nose, or in the diaper area. It is caused by *Staphylococcus* or *Streptococcus* bacteria. These bacteria can cause skin infections, especially if someone has dry skin, eczema, burns, scratches, cuts, or insect bites.

How is it spread?

The bacteria are spread when someone touches the bumps or blisters of an impetigo infection. It can also be spread on bed linens, towels or clothing that have been in contact with infected skin.

What do I look for?

Impetigo usually appears around the mouth, nose, or on other exposed skin. Symptoms include a rash of bumps or blisters which may then ooze fluid. Depending on your skin tone, the rash can be red, pink, darker or the same colour as surrounding skin. The sores or blisters usually become covered by a dark yellow or honey coloured crust. Sometimes the infection can become serious and cause fever, pain, swelling, and weakness. If the infection enters the bloodstream, it may cause serious complications.

How is it treated?

A health care provider can treat impetigo with antibiotics. The medication may be taken by mouth or come in the form of an ointment and spread on the skin. Children should stay home from school or day care until 24 hours after treatment has been started. Blisters should be covered if still oozing fluid when children return to school.

How can I protect myself?

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizers when hands are not visibly dirty.
- Wash your hands after touching/scratching the rash or blisters and/or handling nose and throat secretions (e.g., after throwing out facial tissues or changing the dressing).
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow and encourage others to do the same.
- Soiled articles should be washed in soapy water.
- Toys, equipment, and commonly touched surfaces should be disinfected. Make sure skin care products such as soaps, toothbrushes and unwashed towels are not shared.
- If you are ill, stay at home and isolate yourself from others.

May 4, 2023

