

Impetigo

Impetigo is a common skin infection among children. The bacteria that cause impetigo grow under scabs (or *crusts*) that form on the skin. The infection can spread rapidly to healthy skin areas, as well as to other people.

Treatment of impetigo requires keeping the affected skin **clean**. Medicine may be used to kill the bacteria.

To Treat Impetigo and Prevent Its Spread:

- Give your child the medicine that your doctor has prescribed.
- **Clean** the affected areas at least 3 times a day with soap and water.
- Use a **fresh washcloth** and **towel** whenever possible to prevent spreading the infection to other parts of the child's body.
Do NOT let other people use the child's washcloths or towels.
- Change the child's bed linens every day.
- Keep the child's **fungernails cut short** and **smooth** to prevent scratching. Also keep them **clean**. (Scratching can injure the affected area and spread the infection.)
- **Wash** the child's hands often to prevent spreading the infection. (Everyone living in the child's home should practice good hygiene to prevent catching the infection.)

Contact the doctor if:

- The infection continues to spread.
- The child develops a fever.
- Sores appear on a baby who is less than 2 months old.

Other Instructions:

If recommended by your doctor, after washing the child, apply an antibacterial ointment (such as Bacitracin[®] or Polysporin[®]).

Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names; any similar products may be used.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If your child has persistent health problems or if you have further questions, please consult your health care provider.

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