



WAIONEKE SCHOOL Information on Impetigo (School Sores)

Dear Parents

We have had a couple of cases of Impetigo in the Junior School. Please read the following information and check your children. If you think they may have Impetigo please seek the appropriate treatment. If you are unsure or have any questions please contact the school office.

Kind regards

The Waioneke Team

What is Impetigo?

Impetigo is a skin infection. It is often called “school sores” because it is common in school children and it spreads amongst them quite easily.

Key points to remember about Impetigo

- Impetigo is a common skin infection in children caused by bacteria
- Impetigo is very contagious (catching) and can be easily spread to other children
- Try to prevent your child scratching the sores as much as possible; cover sores with a watertight dressing and cut your child’s fingernails
- Your child can go back to school, kindergarten or day care after 24 hours of treatment and when the sores are completely covered with dressings
- Continue medical treatment until all sores are healed

What causes impetigo?

- Impetigo is caused by bacteria (usually by one of two bacteria called either *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Streptococcus pyogenes*). These bacteria can live on the skin, in the throat or nose, or on other parts of the body without causing a problem but sometimes they start to cause an infection such as impetigo.
- Impetigo can occur even when the skin is kept clean; it is not a sign of poor parenting. It can occur on healthy skin but it often happens when the skin has already been damaged by a scratch, bite or condition such as eczema or chickenpox.

What are the signs and symptoms of impetigo?



* The sores can be anywhere on the body, but most often occur on exposed areas such as the face (near the mouth and nose), or on the hands, arms or legs.

* Impetigo usually starts with a blister or a group of blisters, the blisters burst leaving a patch of red, wet skin which weeps or oozes the spot usually becomes coated with a tan or yellowish crust, making it look like it has been

covered with honey; it grows larger day by day

* There can be small spots around the first spots, spreading outwards

* Impetigo is usually itchy



How is impetigo spread?

- The fluid and crusts of the sore contain the bacteria
- Infection can easily spread to other parts of your child's body when they touch or scratch their sore; the bacteria can also be spread from parts of the body that do not appear to be affected, such as from a runny nose
- Infection can also easily spread to others by:– direct skin contact– contact with infected clothing, towels, sponges or face-cloths– frequently handled playthings and utensils that are infected
- Sore can be infectious as long as it is weeping or oozing
- Usually a sore has stopped being infectious about 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started, and healing has begun

When should I seek help for impetigo?

You should see your GP (general practitioner) as soon as you suspect your child has impetigo.

If treated promptly, impetigo is not usually a serious infection but untreated impetigo can lead to serious illness.

Go back to your GP if you have started treatment and:

- The sores do not begin to heal within two days
- More sores develop
- Redness spreads around a sore
- Your child is unwell with a fever or you are worried about their symptoms
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What is the treatment for impetigo?

Treatment depends on how far the impetigo has spread and how severe it is your doctor may prescribe either an antibiotic or antiseptic ointment applied to the affected area or antibiotics taken by mouth (or both)

- If antibiotic medicine is prescribed, give it to your child as recommended by your doctor; it is important to finish the full course of medical treatment, even if the sores have healed
- Gently clean the crusts or oozing sores by soaking a clean cloth in a solution and applying to your child's sores several times a day; you can make up one of the following solutions:– half a cup of white vinegar in a litre of warm water– soap and warm water– half a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water. Alternatively, you can use an antiseptic solution such as Savlon or Dettol (follow the directions for making the solution on the bottle)
- Try to prevent your child scratching the sores as much as possible; cutting your child's fingernails can help prevent damage and infection from scratching
- Cover sores with a watertight dressing to prevent the infected fluid and crusts from spreading
- Using an antiseptic soap may prevent the infection spreading to other parts of the body
- Impetigo should clear up in a few days with treatment but may need to be treated again if the sores recur.

How to reduce the spread of impetigo

- Keep your child home from school, kindergarten or day care until they have had 24 hours of treatment. Make sure their sores are completely covered by dressings.
- Your child should avoid swimming until all the sores have healed.
- Wash your child's clothes, towels and bed linen separately from the rest of the family. Wash them in hot water and dry in the sunshine or a hot tumble dryer. Toys can be washed using a mild disinfectant.