**IMPETIGO**

Impetigo is a contagious skin infection often occurring on the nose, arms, or legs or around the mouth. This infection is common in young children.

**CAUSE**  
*Streptococcus* and/or *Staphylococcus* bacteria, including Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

**SYMPTOMS**  
Typically begins at a break in the skin (e.g., insect bite, cut). Sores form on the skin and produce a thick golden-yellow discharge that dries, crusts, and sticks to the skin.

Rarely, problems such as kidney disease or cellulitis (skin infection) may develop if children do not receive proper treatment.

**SPREAD**  
From person-to-person through touching the fluid from the sores. Rarely, through touching contaminated objects.

**INCUBATION**  
It usually takes 1 to 10 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms begin.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD**  
Until sores are healed or the person has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

**EXCLUSION**  
Childcare and School: If impetigo is confirmed by a healthcare provider, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and sores are drying or improving.

**DIAGNOSIS**  
Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has impetigo.

**TREATMENT**  
Impetigo can be treated with topical antibiotics (applied directly to the skin) when only a few sores are present. Oral or injectable antibiotics may also be prescribed.

**PREVENTION/CONTROL**

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with sores. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.**
- Wear disposable medical gloves if applying ointment to sores or use cotton-tipped swabs.
- Cover sores whenever possible to prevent spread. Discourage children from scratching infected areas.
- DO NOT share towels, washcloths, or clothing.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Kentucky Department for Public Health Frankfort, KY  
http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/  
Kentucky Regional Poison Center Louisville, KY  
EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222  
Lake Cumberland District Health Department Somerset KY  
www.lcdhd.org  
(606) 678-4761  
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA  
Toll free: 1-800-311-3435  
www.cdc.gov

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June 2008