

Impetigo

What is impetigo?

Impetigo is a contagious skin infection usually caused by staphylococcus or streptococcus bacteria. Epidemics can occur in sports with close body contact such as wrestling.

How does it occur?

Impetigo is common in sports because of the increased perspiration, body heat, and friction caused by sports equipment. The extra moisture and warmth create an environment that encourages growth of the bacteria and the friction provides breaks in the skin to allow the bacteria to enter. This infected skin rash occurs after a person has contact with this bacteria, usually over an area of broken skin. The bacteria may be on another person's skin or on equipment.

What are the symptoms?

The rash or lesions of impetigo are sores that usually have a weeping golden crust. They may be the size and thickness of a dime or become larger and deeper.

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will examine your skin.

How is it treated?

Impetigo is best treated by antibiotics taken by mouth. Some antibiotic creams are useful in treating impetigo. It is extremely important to keep your skin clean with soap and water. The condition is no longer contagious when the rash is gone.

How can impetigo be prevented?

It is important for coaches in sports such as wrestling, to keep mats and equipment clean. In sports such as wrestling where there may be close contact it is important that athletes not be allowed to participate while they have impetigo.