



# Student Health Center UNC Wilmington

## INSTRUCTION SHEET: IMPETIGO

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed impetigo. Impetigo is an infection of the skin caused by bacteria (germs). The infection is easily treated, and rarely serious. Treatment consists of an antibiotic by mouth or an antibiotic ointment rubbed onto the skin.

Impetigo is most common in young children. Children two to six years-old are most often affected, but impetigo can be seen in older children and even adults.

Impetigo is more common in warm climates and warm months of the year. Insect bites, more frequent in warm weather, play a part in causing impetigo. Bug bites and other small breaks in the skin allow germs to penetrate the protective outer layer of skin. The germs may multiply, resulting in small areas of infection.

The lesions of impetigo begin as tiny blisters. The blisters break, and a yellow crust surrounded by redness appears. The yellow crusts “weep” clear fluid.

Itching is the main symptom of impetigo. The lesions are not painful. Fever is unusual, as is a toxic (sick-looking) appearance.

The infection is contagious; impetigo is spread by direct contact (touching). A person is prone to infection if he/she has small breaks in the skin, and has physical contact with a person infected with impetigo.

### MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR CHILD'S IMPETIGO:

- 1- The entire skin surface should be cleaned daily with soap and water. A daily bath or shower with good cleaning will suffice.
- 2- An antibiotic by mouth, or topical (rubbed on) ointment is prescribed. If an antibiotic by mouth is prescribed, the medicine should be taken as directed, until gone. If ointment is prescribed, rub a light film onto the affected areas three times a day.
- 3- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) can be used to control itching. Adults can take 25 to 50 mg, up to 4 times a day. The main side effect of diphenhydramine is drowsiness.
- 4- If worsening of your condition occurs, seek prompt medical care with your personal/referral provider or go to the nearest emergency department. Specifically, seek care if you develop a toxic (sick looking) appearance or fever greater than 101 degrees.