

## Impetigo

- Impetigo is a common skin infection among children. It is caused by bacteria: either group A streptococcus, Staphylococcus aureus, or both.
- Spreads easily from one child to another by touch or i.e. via toys.
- Symptoms include small, red skin changes on which sores can develop, often around the nose and mouth, and on the scalp. The sores break open and a yellow or "honey-colored" scab forms over the sore.
- Sores can spread to any area of the body. Scratching the skin can make them spread even more easily.
- If the skin infection is on a small area of the body: soften the sores, for example with a saline wrap or by soaking them. Apply antibiotic ointment to the skin changes. The ointment can be bought from a pharmacy without a prescription.
- If the skin infection is on a large skin area or the scalp, it is treated with oral antibiotics. In addition, soften the sores as described above.
- The child can return to daycare or school, when the scabs have dried **and**
  - 48 hours have passed since starting treatment with antibiotic ointment
  - 24 hours have passed since starting treatment with oral antibiotics.

### *Please note*

- Keep the child's nail short and avoid touching the infected skin area
- Wash hands with water and soap when arriving at daycare/school, after using the toilet, and before meals. Use your own towel.
- Change and wash bed linen, towels and clothes daily, until the crusts have dried. Wash also all stuffed toys. Clean the contact surfaces thoroughly, such as door handles.
- Failure to soak sores is a common reason for treatment failure, as the bacteria can survive under the sores.
- Contact healthcare if:
  - The infection is on a large area, scalp or if the ointment treatment does not work
  - You suspect that a newborn has impetigo. Impetigo can be dangerous for newborns.