

School sores (impetigo)



School sores (impetigo) are a superficial skin infection caused by *Staphylococcus* or *Streptococcus* bacteria, or sometimes both. They are most common in children.

How school sores are spread

The bacteria can easily spread to other parts of the infected person's body or to other people directly by contact with sores, or indirectly by contact with contaminated clothes.

Signs and symptoms

School sores appear as a flat, yellow, crusty or moist patches on the skin (see image), usually on exposed parts of the body such as the face and legs. The sores are often greater than 1cm in diameter.



Image: Impetigo (school sore)

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based on examination of the sores. Dry, cracked skin serves as an area for growth of the *Streptococcus* and *Staphylococcus* bacteria.

Incubation period

(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)

4 to 10 days.

Infectious period

(time during which an infected person can infect others)

As long as there is discharge from the sores. School sores are extremely infectious.

Treatment

Your doctor may recommend antibiotic cream for mild and localised school sores. Antibiotics by mouth may be needed for multiple school sores and recurrent school sores.

Any sores on exposed surfaces should be covered with a watertight dressing.

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Prevention

School sores can be prevented by the following measures:

- > [Exclude people with school sores from childcare, preschool, school and work](#) until appropriate treatment has commenced. Any sores on exposed surfaces should be completely covered with a dressing.
- > [Good hand washing procedures](#) should be encouraged.

Useful links

- > [Exclusion periods from childcare, preschool, school and work](#)
- > [Hand hygiene](#)
- > [National Healthy Skin Guideline](#)

You've Got What? 5th Edition

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www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/youvegotwhat

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*SA Health Safety and Quality Community Advisory Group.



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