

Impetigo

Impetigo is a common and mild skin infection seen most often in children and frequently spread among family members. It is caused by common skin bacteria, usually staph (staphylococci) or strep (streptococci). It is very contagious and is spread by person to person contact. Risk of getting impetigo increases with poor nutrition, illness (which lowers the body's resistance), warm, and moist environments (like wrestling and weight rooms), and poor hygiene.

Impetigo usually starts as small red bumps or blisters. These can get quite large. A "honey-crusted" drainage is common. If left untreated, impetigo can continue for weeks. Rarely, kidney inflammation occurs after impetigo, causing blood or protein in the urine. **Fighters cannot fight or spar in practice or competition with impetigo.**

Treatment

Impetigo is curable with antibiotic creams or with medication taken by mouth. You can expect improvement in five to ten days. Bactroban® and Altabax® are prescription antibiotic ointments often used. (Over-the-counter antibiotic creams are not strong enough.) Wash the affected area and gently scrub off crusting and loose, dead skin with a cloth. Dry off and apply a small amount of Bactroban® or Altabax®. Do this three times a day (about every eight hours). If you are given an antibiotic by mouth, take the entire prescription as directed by your doctor.

DO:

- See your doctor to make the diagnosis, get treatment and obtain medical clearance.
- Maintain good hygiene. Wear clean clothes every day. Shower and shampoo at least once a day. Wash your entire body with an antibacterial soap.
- Launder bedding, clothing and towels frequently.
- Trim finger nails if scratching is a problem.

DON'T:

- Impetigo is highly contagious by touch or contact. So don't work out on the mats or in the gym until 1) at least five full days of treatment, 2) the area looks normal and healed, and 3) you are cleared by your trainer or physician.
- Don't share personal items like headgear, wrestling shoes, razors, combs, brushes, hats, soaps or shampoos, towels, clothing or bedding.
- Don't use over-the-counter medications – they are usually not helpful.
- Don't shave infected areas. If you have to shave use an electric razor.
- Don't break any blisters and avoid scratching.

Never use bleach, peroxide, iodine or other chemical disinfectants. These may not cure it, may scar and may irritate the skin. This may make it look worse to the referee or doctor and delay your return to competition.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- You are not better in seven to 10 days.
- You have a temperature of 101° F.
- Other family members become infected.
- Your urine is discolored or there is blood in the urine.

This handout should not be considered complete nor a substitute for evaluation and treatment by a physician. Always consult your doctor first.

