Impetigo Bacterial Skin Rash

Impetigo is a highly contagious skin infection that is caused by staphylococcus (staph) and streptococcus (strep) bacteria. It is most common amongst children aged between 2-6 years than adults. This skin infection may often start as a minor scratch or appear as a red sore on the upper lip – similar to a cold sore or fever blister. It then forms a blister that ruptures and secretes to form a yellowish-brown crust. Impetigo is spread by direct contact to others from sharing towels, clothing, toys and other personal items. These sores may also spread to other parts of the body including the face or hands as well as to other people from scratching or touching.
There are types of impetigo, non-bullous and bullous impetigo. Non-bullous impetigo is the most common form and is caused by *staphylococcus and streptococcus* bacteria. It is characterized by tiny blisters or scabs that form yellowish-brown crusts. Bullous impetigo is caused by *staphylococcus* bacteria which produces toxins that cause breakage in the skin. The symptoms and signs of non-bullous and bullous impetigo include:

**Non-bullous impetigo**
- Affects the nose, face, arms, and legs
- Appears as small blisters or scabs
- Forms yellow or honey-colored crusts

**Bullous impetigo**
- Appears in various skin areas such as buttocks
- Blisters leave red, raw skin with ragged edge

**What Causes Impetigo?**

Impetigo is caused by two types of bacteria, *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph) and *Streptococcus pyogenes* or hemolytic (strep). Both types of bacteria are known to thrive wherever there is close contact with large groups of people, particularly in schools or daycare environments. Staph and strep bacteria are harmless until they enter through a wound and cause an infection. Children are more likely to develop impetigo through a cut, scrapes, burns or insect bite or if the skin has already been irritated by other skin problems such as eczema, poison ivy, chicken pox or allergies. Impetigo in adults comes about as a result of injury to the skin, also by skin conditions such as dermatitis.

**Risk factors include:**

**Weak Immune system**
- Poor hygiene habits
- Direct contact with a person who has impetigo
- Using personal items such as towels, linen or clothing of a person with impetigo
- Anemia
- Chronic dermatitis
- Malnutrition, lack of vegetables in diet
- Crowded conditions
- Participation in skin-to-skin contact sports such as football
- Warm, humid weather
- People with diabetes or a compromised immune system
Diagnosing Impetigo

If your child develops sores or blisters, consult your doctor for a proper diagnosis. Your doctor may **remove a bit of material from the sore** with a cotton swab to have it tested for the presence of bacteria. Bacterial infections are usually red, yellow, brown and are spots without a distinct border of where they are and are not. Fungus will usually form with border, tend to have round areas and have some white spots.

Help for Impetigo

The treatment for impetigo depends on the type of impetigo, the severity of the condition and the age of your child. Treatment options **include topical and oral antibiotics** as well as certain hygienic measures. Minor cases of impetigo may be treated by simply cleaning the wound – wash the wound two to three times a day with mild soap and water. Use hydrogen peroxide to wash the wound area. Soak stubborn crusts in warm water or compress them with a saline solution before applying topical antibiotics. Parents should ensure that the child's fingernails are cut short to **avoid scratching of the affected area**. Topical antibiotics ointments such as Bactroban (see natural ointment at end of this article) may be applied to the skin to treat the infection. If the infection is widespread or slow to respond to the ointment, oral antibiotics are not helpful as they will weaken long term defense.

Natural remedies

Natural and holistic treatments are also extremely effectively in **relieving the symptoms of bacterial infections**. Herbal and homeopathic remedies are safe to use without the harsh side effects of prescription drugs, and best of all they maintain overall physical and emotional health.

- Herbs such as Hypoxis Rooperi (extract of African Potato), Agathosma Betulina (also known as buchu) and Mentha Piperita help to **boost and strengthen immune system functioning**. A combination of herbal and homeopathic ingredients such as Natrium muriaticum, Kalium muriaticum, Galium aperine (Cleavers) and Trifolium pratense (red clover) helps to balance and hydrate the skin and promote the natural process of skin healing. Cleavers (Galium aparine). This anti-inflammatory herb is believed to support the lymphatic system. It may be taken internally to help heal staph abscesses and reduce swelling of the lymph nodes. A cleavers compress can also be applied directly to a skin infection.
- Goldenseal (Hydrastis canadensis). Another herb believed to fight infection and reduce inflammation, goldenseal may be taken internally when symptoms of infection first appear. Skin infections can be treated by making a paste of water and powdered goldenseal root and applying it directly to the affected area. The preparation should be covered with a clean bandage and left in place overnight.
- Coconut oil, thyme, thymol in Listerine, grapefruit seed extract
Symptoms of impetigo

Impetigo causes sores and blisters on the skin

Impetigo does not cause any symptoms until four to 10 days after the initial exposure to the bacteria. This means that people can easily pass the infection on to others without realising that they are infected.

The symptoms of bullous and non-bullous impetigo are described below.

**Bullous impetigo**

The symptoms of bullous impetigo begin with the appearance of fluid-filled blisters, which usually occur on the trunk (the central part of the body from above the waist, but excluding the head and neck) or on the arms and legs.

The blisters may quickly spread, before bursting after several days to leave a yellow crust which heals without leaving any scarring.

The blisters aren't usually painful, but the area of skin surrounding them may be itchy. As with non-bullous impetigo, it is important that you do not touch or scratch the affected areas of the skin.

Symptoms of fever and swollen glands are more common in cases of bullous impetigo.

**Non-bullous impetigo**

The symptoms of non-bullous impetigo begin with the appearance of red sores that usually occur around the nose and mouth. However, sometimes other areas of the face and the limbs can also be affected.

The sores quickly burst leaving thick, yellow-brown golden crusts. After the crusts dry, they leave a red mark that usually heals without scarring. The time it takes for the redness to disappear can vary between a few days and a few weeks.

The sores are not painful, but they may be itchy. It is important not to touch, or scratch, the sores because this can spread the infection to other parts of your body, and to other people.
Other symptoms of impetigo, such as a fever and swollen glands, are rare but can occur in more severe cases.

**Immune Boosting Foods**

- **Grapefruit**
  - Packed with vitamin C makes this an immune-boosting essential. They are packed with bioflavonoids, which are phytonutrients.

- **Cruciferous Vegetables**
  - Rich in antioxidant vitamins which give an immune system boost, and also contain Choline which keeps your cells functioning properly and helps maintain healthy gastrointestinal tract.

- **Carrots**
  - A great source of beta carotene which support the body’s mucus membrane, which lines the respiratory and intestinal tracts, making it harder for bacteria to enter the bloodstream.

- **Cinnamon**
  - Cinnamon is an antiviral, antifungal, and antibacterial and an immune system booster. It actually fights the pathogens that cause illness.

- **Berries**
  - Berries contain antioxidants responsible for the health of your immune system, as well as your body’s ability to destroy invading bacteria and germs. They also contain vitamin C and magnesium, two nutrients that are essential in maintaining the strength and function of your immune system.

- **Mushrooms**
  - A major source of the immune system-boosting mineral, zinc. If you don’t have enough zinc in your diet tend to have fewer white blood cells to help fight off disease, which can lead to a reduced immune response.

- **Kale**
  - Greens such as kale, spinach, and Swiss chard are immune-boosting foods that contain high levels of vitamin C, which help fight off infection and regenerate other antioxidants in the body, including vitamin E. They also contain folate, another immune booster.

- **Watermelon**
  - Contains antioxidant Vitamins A and C, which helps to neutralize free radicals than can lead to inflammation, general sickness and chronic illnesses such as stroke and heart attack. It contains beta-carotene, which helps fight cancer, particularly colon cancer. Lycopene, a carotenoid found in watermelon provides additional cancer fighting health benefits.

[http://eatingmywaytobetterhealth.blogspot.com/](http://eatingmywaytobetterhealth.blogspot.com/)
Your immune system protects you from these invaders via the white blood cell
Everywhere you look there’s talk about boosting our immune system these days. But don’t let all the hype cause you to overlook the importance of the message. A strong immune system is indispensable for a healthy body. Pesky infections, chronic allergies and various gastrointestinal problems are signs that our immune system may not be in fighting condition. And *fight* is exactly what it is designed to do. When healthy, our immune systems defend the body against allergies, infections, free radical damage, viruses, bacteria, and degenerative diseases.

Dr. Woodson Merrell, director of integrative medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City said, “*The strength of our immune system is what makes the difference between who gets sick and who doesn’t*.”

Fortunately, western studies and thousands of years of Chinese wisdom validate the fact that some foods are packed with the essential vitamins and minerals that have the power to fortify our immune system. **Here are 8 Foods to Boost Your Immune System:**

1. **Broccoli and Cauliflower** are in the cruciferous family that gets overlooked for its health benefits simply because it lacks the chlorophyll-induced color. It is on the immune boosting list because it is
rich in glutathione, an essential molecule Mark Hyman, M.D. an internationally recognized authority in the field of Functional Medicine calls the secret to prevent aging, cancer, heart disease, dementia and more. The good news for women is that it also contains indole-3-carbinol, a substance that enhances estrogen metabolism.

2. **Cinnamon without white sugar** does more than boost the immune system. It actually fights the pathogens that cause illness. Cinnamon is one of the easiest nutrient rich foods to add to your diet. It enhances the flavor of coffee, perks up your morning oatmeal and livens up the taste of fresh fruit. It is also on the Super Food list for foods that help to prevent diabetes.

3. **Garlic** has a wide range of well-documented effects including helping to fight infection and boosting immune function. It is packed with vitamin C, B1, B6, iron, phosphorus and Alliin which converts to Allicin; the major antibacterial constituent of garlic. To activate garlic’s immune boosting enzymes, peel chop and let sit for at least 20 minutes.

4. **Mushroom** – *White button mushrooms* in particular, are a major source of zinc; a known immune boosting mineral. In addition, this lowly mushroom not only activates natural killer cells that destroy viruses but it may be higher in antioxidants than more exotic types of mushrooms such as Maitake.

5. **Eggs?** Yes, eggs! Although this super food has been given a bad rap, it boosts the highest-quality protein of any food and the compound choline which helps to ward off autoimmune diseases like Crohn and colitis. Egg yolks also contain zinc and selenium which are important minerals that enhance the immune system. In fact, studies show that the slew of nutrients in an egg yolk is so comprehensive that it may offer better insurance than a multi-vitamin. According to Registered Dietitian **Cynthia Sass**, approximately 200 studies conducted over 25 years have looked at the link between eggs and heart disease and found that eggs, though relatively high in cholesterol, are actually very low in saturated fat; the fat that ups the risk of heart disease. As a result eggs have been re-categorized as a “good guy” and that is great news for our immune system.
6. **Kale** tops the list of immune boosters for many reasons. Here are just of few – it is high in fiber with 49 different flavonoids, tons of antioxidants, and loaded with vitamins C and K; two powerful vitamins that does so much to keep our bodies humming they’re too numerous to name here. Take our word for it; your immune system will thank you if you make Kale a staple on your grocery list.

7. **Watermelon** contrary to popular belief is not just a picnic food. It’s large concentration of lycopene and that wonder molecule glutathione found in the red pulpy flesh near the rind makes it a bonafide immune boosting hero. Glutathione is a key player in intermediary metabolism, immune response and our overall health. For that reason, we believe it deserves a place at the table.

8. **Nuts** – Let’s not just choose one type though! A blend of nuts and seeds are high in fiber, dietary phenols and protein that nourish probiotics, the good bacteria that live in our digestive system. And, thanks to recent studies, we now know that to have a robust immune system we need to have a healthy digestive system.

9. **Berries**

To complete your immune boosting plan, do some moderate exercise, get plenty of rest, stress reduction and find creative ways to add more of these super foods into your diet.
15 Foods that Boost Your Immune System

Posted on September 21, 2012 by TonyA

Cold season is coming soon and Affective Healthcare wants you to be prepared. Add these 15 foods to your diet to boost your immune system and keep you healthy!

Elderberry
An old folk remedy, extract from these dark berries appears to block flu viruses in test tube studies. But scientists caution that further study is needed. The fruit itself is rich in antioxidants and may also have the ability to fight inflammation.

Button Mushrooms
Don't dismiss the lowly mushroom as nutrient poor: It has the mineral selenium and antioxidants. Low levels of selenium have been linked to increased risk of developing more severe flu. And the B vitamins riboflavin and niacin, found in these mushrooms, play a role in a healthy immune system. Animal studies have also shown mushrooms to have antiviral, antibacterial, and anti-tumor effects.
Acai Berry
Hawked as a “super food” along with produce like blueberries, the little acai berry’s dark color signals that it is high in antioxidants called anthocyanins. While the acai is not scientifically linked to specific disease- or illness-fighting ability, antioxidants may help your body fight aging and disease. Acai berries can be found most often in juice or smoothie form, or dried and mixed with granola.

Oysters
Aphrodisiac? Immune boosters? Maybe both, thanks to the mineral zinc that’s found in oysters. Low zinc levels have been associated with male infertility. And zinc appears to have some antiviral effect, although researchers can’t explain why. However, they do know it is important to several immune system tasks including healing wounds.
Watermelon
Hydrating and refreshing, ripe watermelon also has plenty of a powerful antioxidant, glutathione. Known to help strengthen the immune system so it can fight infection, glutathione is found in the red pulpy flesh near the rind.

Cabbage
This is a source of immune-strengthening glutamine. And cabbage is easy and inexpensive to find during the winter months when it’s in season. Try adding cabbages of any variety (white, red, Chinese) to soups and stews to sneak in extra antioxidants and boost your meal’s nutritional value.

Almonds
A handful of almonds may shore up your immune system from the effects of stress. A recommended 1/4 cup serving carries nearly 50% of the daily recommended amount of vitamin E, which helps boost the immune system. And they have riboflavin and niacin, B vitamins that may help you bounce back from the effects of stress.
Grapefruit
Grapefruits have a good amount of vitamin C. But science has yet to prove that you can easily get enough vitamin C through foods alone, without supplementation, to help treat cold and flu. However, grapefruit is packed with flavonoids — natural chemical compounds that have been found to increase immune system activation. Dislike grapefruits? Try oranges or tangerines.

Wheat Germ
Wheat germ is the part of a wheat seed that feeds a baby wheat plant, so it is full of nutrients. It has zinc, antioxidants, and B vitamins among other vital vitamins and minerals. Wheat germ also offers a good mix of fiber, protein, and some good fat. Substitute wheat germ for part of the regular flour called for in baked goods and other recipes.
Low-Fat Yogurt

A daily cup may reduce your chances of getting a cold. Look for labels listing “live and active cultures.” Some researchers believe they may stimulate your immune system to fight disease. Also look for vitamin D. Recent studies have found a link between low vitamin D levels and an increased risk of cold and flu.

Garlic

Garlic offers several antioxidants that battle immune system invaders. Among garlic’s targets are H. pylori, the bacteria associated with some ulcers and stomach cancer. Cooking tip: Peel, chop and let sit 15 to 20 minutes before cooking to activate immune-boosting enzymes.

Spinach

Known as a “super food,” spinach is nutrient-rich. It has folate, which helps your body produce new cells and repair DNA. And it boasts fiber, antioxidants, such as vitamin C, and more. Eat spinach raw or lightly cooked to get the most benefit.
Tea
Green or black? Both are loaded with disease-fighting polyphenols and flavonoids. These antioxidants seek out cell-damaging free radicals and destroy them. No SINthetic chemicals Please.

Sweet Potato
Like carrots, sweet potatoes have the antioxidant beta-carotene, which mops up damaging free radicals. Sweet potatoes also boast vitamin A, which is linked to slowing the aging process and may reduce the risk of some cancers.

Broccoli
Easy to find at the grocery store and incorporate into meals, broccoli is an immune-boosting basic. One study reported a chemical in broccoli helped stimulate the immune systems of mice. Plus, it’s full of nutrients that protect your body from damage. It has vitamins A, vitamin C, and glutathione. Add some low-fat cheese to round out a side dish with immune-enhancing B vitamins and vitamin D.
Polysporin is an antimicrobial compound that is available in ointment form to treat minor skin wounds. It is also used in combination with one or more other antimicrobials in preparations for ophthalmic care. Polysporin kills bacteria or slows their growth to reduce the likelihood of infection. Some people experience unpleasant side effects from polysporin. Fortunately for them, natural alternatives can produce results comparable to those seen for polysporin. Consult your doctor before using any alternative remedy.

**ECHINACEA**

Stephen Harrod Buhner, author of “Herbal Antibiotics: Natural Alternatives for Treating Drug-Resistant Bacteria,” strongly recommends echinacea, which is derived from the flowers or the roots of the purple coneflower. He says the herb not only has potent antibiotic properties, but also stimulates the body’s immune system, corrects tissue abnormalities and combats inflammation. All of these qualities make echinacea ideal for use in the treatment of external wounds, in which the primary aims are to promote healing and prevent infection.

James A. Duke, author of “The Green Pharmacy Herbal Handbook,” points out that Germany’s Commission E, the agency responsible for reviewing herbal remedies, approves the use of echinacea to treat superficial wounds. However, botanist Duke says that drinking a cup of echinacea tea to strengthen
the immune system might be the best way to fight off possible infection. Check with a medical professional to see if treatment with echinacea is appropriate for you.

**ALOE AND CAYENNE**

Although each is recognized primarily for characteristics starkly different from the other, both aloe and cayenne can be used as an alternative to polysporin or other antibiotic ointments in the treatment of minor external wounds. Long recognized for its usefulness in treating burns, aloe also has natural anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, according to Linda B. White and Steven Foster, authors of “The Herbal Drugstore.” The plant also contains allantoin, which stimulates cellular growth, thus hastening healing. Slice an aloe leaf and generously slather the area of the wound with the aloe gel. Repeat as needed.

Capsaicin, a compound in the cayenne pepper, relieves pain, inhibits bleeding, promotes healthy circulation, fights infection and speeds healing, according to White and Foster. They report that tests comparing the speed of healing from antibiotic ointments with that from capsaicin-based creams confirmed that the latter were more effective. Use capsaicin-based creams only and not cayenne pepper or the spice itself, as those substances can irritate the skin. Consult your doctor before using aloe, cayenne or any other alternative treatment.

**TEA TREE OIL**

Tea tree oil, a pale yellow-colored oil derived from the leaves of the Melaleuca alternifolia, native to Australia, has some pretty impressive properties for the treatment of minor skin wounds, according to botanist Duke. In “The Green Pharmacy Herbal Handbook,” he says much of the credit goes to terpinen-4-ol, a potent antiseptic compound found in the oil. He warns, however, that the oil in undiluted form sometimes causes irritation, particularly in those with sensitive skin. To reduce the chances of such side effects, Duke suggests dilution by mixing several drops of tea tree oil into 2 tbsp. of vegetable oil. If irritation should occur, dilute it further or discontinue use. However, talk to a medical professional before using tea tree oil or any other alternative remedy.

**HONEY AND GARLIC**

Honey and garlic can make a fast cheap antibiotic ointment add some cinnamon if you wish.
Oral Antibiotics weaken the immune system and have other disorder aggravating results.

Use probiotic yogurts and supplements to stimulate immunity.
Probiotic yogurt stimulates the immune system.

Peer-reviewed studies report that the regular use of yogurt reduces:

a) the levels of harmful bacteria that promote dental decay and periodontal disease in the mouths of children;

b) the risk of premature birth in women with bacterial vaginosis and pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure) in first time mothers;

c) the likelihood of diarrhea and other gastrointestinal complaints relating to antibiotic use;

d) the incidence of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome according to intervention trials and large population studies.

Stop Anti-biotics
Use Probiotics