

Pharmacy First: Impetigo

NICE NG153 | NHS England Pharmacy First PGDs 3a/3b/3c v1.1 (Oct 2025)

■ REFER: Do Not Treat Under This PGD

- Bullous impetigo (fluid-filled blisters 1-2cm, thin flat crust after rupture): refer to GP urgently
- Immunosuppressed with widespread impetigo: A&E; urgently
- Complications (large blisters, severe spreading redness, suspected cellulitis): A&E; urgently
- Recurrent impetigo (2 or more episodes this year): refer to GP
- Active uncontrolled eczema, scabies, chickenpox, or eczema herpeticum present: refer to GP

Sepsis: call 999. Systemically unwell: refer to GP or A&E.;

Lesion count	Treatment	Notes
3 or fewer (localised)	Hydrogen peroxide 1% cream (first line): 3x daily x5 days	First line always. Second line: fusidic acid only if H2O2 unsuitable or failed.
4 or more (widespread)	Flucloxacillin oral (four times daily x5 days)	Check penicillin allergy. Oral, not topical.
Any count, bullous type	Do NOT treat. Refer to GP.	Blisters not crusts = bullous. Outside all PGDs.

■ CHECK: Before Supplying Fusidic Acid

- Second line only: hydrogen peroxide must be unsuitable or must have failed first
- Any previous use of topical fusidic acid for any condition: EXCLUDED (resistance risk)
- Patient smokes or is regularly near naked flames: EXCLUDED (fire hazard)
- Lesions near eyes: fusidic acid may be used here if H2O2 is unsuitable

Fusidic acid 2% cream: apply thin layer three times daily for 5 days. Fabric that contacts cream is a fire hazard.

Age	Dose	Penicillin allergy
1 to under 2 years	125mg four times daily	Clarithromycin by weight (BNFc)
2 to 9 years	250mg four times daily	Clarithromycin by weight (BNFc)
10 years and over / adults	500mg four times daily	Clarithromycin by weight (BNFc)

Contagion and counselling: No longer contagious 48 hours after starting treatment (or when lesions are dry and crusted if untreated). Exclude from school or work until no longer contagious. Food handlers must notify employers by law. Wash hands before and after applying cream. Wash flannels, sheets, and towels at high temperature. Flucloxacillin: take on empty stomach (1 hour before or 2 hours after food). Four times daily.