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IMPETIGO CONTAGIOSA

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Impetigo contagiosa is the name given to a type of superficial skin infection, seen by far most frequently in children on exposed portions of the skin, as upon the face, scalp and hands. The lesions are rarely numerous, usually discrete, round or oval, pea to finger nail sized, flat, flaccid vesico-pustules, which dry quickly to form yellow, granular, very superficial, slightly adherent crusts. The vesico-pustules have a narrow, faint, red areola which fades as the crusts are formed. The vesico-pustules usually increase somewhat in size after their appearance. Several closely situated lesions may become covered by a single broad, thin crust. When a vesico-pustule is ruptured or a crust removed a very superficial loss of substance is found, a moist red surface like an abrasion, which heals quickly and leaves no trace. The crusts fall of themselves in a week or ten days. New lesions cease to appear after a few days or a week, but when the disorder is associated with a pruritic disease such as pediculosis the patient may continue to inoculate himself by his scratching and thus prolong the course for several weeks. In young children it is not uncommon to find an infection about one of the finger nails, a superficial acute paronychia. The disease is quite contagious, and has been known to become at times almost epidemic. Among adults the lesions are seen most often on

the bearded region in men. Barber shop razors are common carriers of the infection. In rare instances, together with the typical lesions described, may occur one or more bullae an inch or more in diameter. Except for their size they resemble in every way the ordinary smaller vesico-pustules. It is rather unusual for the lesions of impetigo contagiosa to have a circinate or serpiginous arrangement. A slight amount of itching may occur. The cause of the disease is the ordinary pus cocci, and among these *Staphylococcus aureus* is most often found. **DIAGNOSIS:** *Pustular eczema* is itchy; its lesions are smaller, but tend to coalesce to form large persistent infiltrated patches which become covered with dark colored crusts. *Pemphigus* could be confused only with the rare bullous form of impetigo contagiosa. *Pemphigus* is a chronic disease which occurs chiefly in adults, without history or evidence of contagion. The bullae appear, fully distended, on any part of the body, the face and hands being often exempt. *Pemphigus* is much more resistant to treatment. **TREATMENT:** Impetigo contagiosa is easily cured. The crusts should be removed with soap and warm water and the raw spots kept covered with unguentum hydrargyri ammoniati diluted one-half.