

# Skin problems in children

Problem	Early signs	What to do	If it gets worse	How is it spread?	Time off from school or kura
<b>Boils</b>	 <p>Red bump or pimple with red skin around it. Can have white or yellow pus in the centre Might be itchy or a bit painful A large boil is called an abscess (you say, ab-ses)</p>	<p>Go to the doctor immediately if a boil is near your child's eye Check and clean boils every day Soak the boil in warm water for 20 minutes or cover with a towel soaked in warm water If boil bursts, wipe away pus and blood with a tissue Wash and dry hands before and after touching the boil</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the boil gets larger or more painful</li> <li>more boils appear</li> <li>the boil lasts more than one week</li> <li>red streaks start to appear on the skin around the boil</li> <li>your child gets boils often</li> <li>your child seems unwell or has a fever</li> </ul>	<p>Pus or blood from a boil getting on to the skin can cause more boils</p>	<p>While your child is feeling unwell If your child is feeling well they can go to school or kura but keep boils covered with plasters or dressings</p>
<b>Cellulitis</b> (you say, sell-you-ly-tis)	 <p>Skin will look red and feel warm and painful to touch There may be pus or fluid leaking from the skin Any broken or bruised skin can get infected with cellulitis</p>	<p>Go to the doctor if the cellulitis is painful, bigger than a 10 cent piece or near the eye Check and clean every day Wash the red skin with warm water, or soak in a bath Cover with a clean cloth or plaster if leaking Give your child paracetamol if they are in pain Wash and dry hands before and after touching the infected area Keep your child's nails short and clean Make sure your child rests and eats plenty of fruit and vegetables</p>	 <p><b>Go back to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infected area gets larger or deeper</li> <li>your child seems more unwell or has a fever</li> </ul> <p><b>This is urgent, the infection may travel to your child's blood. Your child may need blood tests and antibiotics</b></p>	<p>Pus, blood or other fluid from the infection gets on to broken skin</p>	<p>For at least 1 day after treatment has started. Or ask your doctor or public health nurse</p>
<b>Cuts, scratches and grazes</b>	 <p>Broken skin with some blood</p>	<p>Clean and check the broken skin daily Wash with warm water Cover with a plaster or bandage. Try to use things that won't stick to the wound Go to the doctor if it is a deep cut or it won't stop bleeding. Your child may need stitches</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the cut, scratch or graze is near the eye</li> <li>the broken skin gets more red, swollen or painful</li> <li>there is pus around the broken skin</li> <li>red lines spread out from the broken skin</li> <li>your child feels unwell or has a fever</li> </ul> <p><b>This may be cellulitis, the infection may travel to your child's blood. Your child may need blood tests and antibiotics</b></p>	<p>Pus, blood or other fluid from the infection gets on to broken skin</p>	<p>If infected, at least 1 day after treatment has started. Or ask your doctor or public health nurse</p>
<b>Eczema</b> (you say, ex-ma) Also called Dermatitis (you say, der-ma-ty-tis)	 <p>Dry itchy skin Skin becomes red Often in moist areas like behind the knees</p>	<p>Keep the eczema clean Use soap-free cleaners instead of soap Moisturise if the skin is dry. This may be many times a day. Use an emollient cream such as fatty cream or non-ionic cream Keep your child's nails short and clean. Try to stop them scratching the eczema See a doctor for medicated creams if your child is waking at night or missing school because of eczema</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>areas of skin start swelling and become more painful</li> <li>there is pus in the eczema</li> </ul> <p>This means the eczema has become infected. It could be cellulitis</p> <p><b>Do not do anything to dry out the skin as this will make the eczema worse</b></p>	<p>Eczema is not contagious</p>	<p>If your child feels well they can go to school or kura</p>
<b>Impetigo</b> (you say, im-pa-ty-go) Also called school sores	 <p>Blisters on exposed parts of body, such as hands, legs and face. Blisters burst and turn into a sore with a yellow crust which gets bigger each day The sores are itchy</p>	<p>Go to the doctor for antibiotic tablets or a cream Check and wash sores every day Use the cream as told by your doctor or nurse Cover sores with a clean cloth or plaster Keep your child's nails short and clean. Try to stop them scratching the sores Wash and dry hands before and after touching the sores</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sores are near the eye</li> <li>sores last more than 1-2 weeks</li> <li>sores become red, swollen and have pus</li> <li>your child has a fever</li> </ul> <p><b>This is urgent, the infection may travel to your child's blood. Your child may need blood tests and antibiotics</b></p>	<p>Pus, blood or other fluid from the sores touching other skin</p>	<p>For at least 1 day after treatment has started. Ask your doctor or public health nurse</p>
<b>Insect bites</b>	 <p>Red bump There may be a blister in the middle Very itchy Sometimes painful (especially spider bites)</p>	<p>Check and clean bites every day Wash the bite with cool water Stop scratching Keep your child's nails short and clean Try to stop them scratching the bites Use something to stop the itching such as ice, calamine lotion or aloe vera</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the bumps last more than 2 weeks</li> <li>the red, swollen area keeps getting bigger or more painful</li> <li>there is pus</li> </ul> <p>The swelling could be poison from the insect or a serious skin infection such as cellulitis</p>	<p>Insects such as mosquitos, fleas or spiders</p>	<p>If your child feels well they can go to school or kura</p>
<b>Ring worm</b>	 <p>Flat, ring-shaped infection</p>	<p>Go to the doctor if your child has a fever or their skin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gets swollen</li> <li>gets warm</li> <li>starts leaking fluid</li> </ul> <p>See your doctor if the ringworm is on your child's scalp. This may cause painful red patches and hair loss Your doctor, public health nurse or pharmacist can suggest a cream to use to kill the infection Check and clean skin every day</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ringworm is on the scalp</li> <li>infected area lasts more than 2 weeks</li> <li>skin becomes red, swollen and has pus</li> <li>your child has a fever</li> </ul> <p>This is a serious skin infection</p>	<p>Ringworm spreads easily through contact with infected skin, clothes or personal items. Also from floors and showers</p>	<p>Until the infection is gone don't let your child do things where their skin could touch other children</p>
<b>Scabies</b> (you say, skay-bees)	 <p>Itchy rash in places such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the forearm</li> <li>around waist</li> <li>between fingers</li> <li>between buttocks</li> <li>under armpits</li> </ul>	<p>Go to the doctor or public health nurse to get cream for everyone in the house Scabies is very contagious so everyone in the house needs to be treated even if you can't see any rash Apply cream to everyone, head to toe - including soles of feet. Don't put cream on or near eyes Wash all sheets, towels and clothing in hot water</p>	 <p><b>Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rash becomes infected</li> <li>the skin is red, painful, warm, swollen or has pus</li> </ul> <p>This is a serious skin infection. Remember, everyone in the house must be treated for scabies</p>	<p>Skin contact with a person with scabies. Sharing sheets, towels and clothes</p>	<p>For at least 1 day after treatment has started</p>

**Check skin infections every day**



Your child's skin may not look exactly like these pictures. Ask your public health nurse, school nurse or doctor what is wrong with your child's skin if you are not sure.

**Remember, wash hands before and after checking skin problems!**