



Connecticut Humane Society  
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## **Puppy Pyoderma, Superficial Pyoderma, Impetigo**

### ***What is it?***

Impetigo is a bacterial infection of the skin in puppies and young dogs. It is most commonly seen in puppies prior to puberty and involving the non-haired skin, such as the groin and armpit areas. This is sometimes called “puppy pimples.”

### ***What are the signs?***

Any of the following may be seen: Papules (red bumps), pustules (pimples), crusts (scabs), epidermal collarettes (circular areas of redness and hair loss with a dark center), patchy alopecia (hair loss), moth-eaten appearance to hair coat, and/or excessive shedding. Occasionally, the lips, eyelids, anal area, and vulva or prepuce may show erosion, fissuring (cracking), and lightening of pigment (coloration). The hair coat may also be dull, dry, flaky, or greasy.

### ***What are the causes?***

Superficial pyoderma is usually secondary to an underlying cause or predisposing factor. They are seen commonly in puppies because their immune (infection-fighting) systems are not yet fully developed. The most common bacterial organism involved in superficial pyoderma is *Staphylococcus intermedius*, which is a normal inhabitant of the skin of healthy dogs. Organisms may be introduced by local trauma, scratching, or an infection resulting from contamination due to a poorly kept coat, parasitic infections, hormonal factors, local irritants, or allergies.

### ***How is it diagnosed?***

The diagnosis is usually made based on visual inspection of the skin, but other tests may be used, including skin cytology (microscopic analysis of material from affected areas) to evaluate for infection, skin scraping, fungal culture, skin biopsy, and/or bacterial culture and sensitivity. Other diagnostic tests may be indicated to evaluate for an underlying disease condition, such as allergy, external parasites, or systemic disease.

### ***What is the treatment?***

A veterinarian will prescribe a safe and effective treatment program that may include topical (applied to the skin) and oral (by mouth) antibiotic therapy. Oral antibiotic therapy may be required for up to 3 or more weeks. Therapeutic bathing is also very beneficial.

### ***What should I do at home?***

Follow the recommended treatment plan. Give all medications as directed and UNTIL FINISHED. Stopping treatment too early may cause the condition to worsen or become resistant to common medications.

### ***What should I expect in the future?***

If the infected areas are not improving or appear to be increasing in number, size, or areas affected, or if any other health concerns arise, consult your veterinarian.