

Impetigo / Jesus Healer

Tammy: Hello Carol. It's nice to see you. How are you?

Carol: Hello Tammy I'm well, thanks...except that when I was babysitting a little girl the other day she shared her school sores with me.

Tammy: Ooo – I noticed the sore on your chin...does it hurt?

Carol: It looks terrible, but it doesn't feel too bad. And don't worry I won't share it with you.

Tammy: That's good! It's good we've got Doctor Kerryn with us today – she might give you some advice on what to do with that sore!

Dr K: Hello Tammy and Carol...and hello to you too... It's nice to be with you again and it sounds like school sores might be the best thing to talk about today.

Carol: So you'll give me some advice?

Dr K: If you make me a cup of tea! (laughing)

Tammy: Why don't I make you both one...and maybe you would like to have one too as you listen?

Carol: Ah this is a nice cup of tea. I hope you're sharing one with us today on *Women of Hope*. So, Doctor Kerryn, have you seen many of these sores?

Dr K: Yes – a lot! My girls and I had them twice each earlier this year. In my work, I see a few people with these sores every day. They're called *impetigo* or *school sores* - probably because they commonly affect children of school age. They can be found anywhere on the body, but are often found on the face near the mouth and nose, or on the arms and legs... You've probably seen children with them – or you've had them yourself.

Tammy: My children have had them too. Share some more about school sores with us.

Dr K: The sore may start with a blister or a group of blisters. The blister bursts leaving a patch of red, wet skin that weeps. The sore may spread out from the center. The red patch usually becomes coated with a yellowish crust, making it look like it's been covered with honey. The sore takes about 1 to 3 days to develop after contact with fluid or crusts from another sore. These skin infections are really common, especially in warm weather or in tropical areas.

Tammy: It sounds like they could be a big problem.

Dr K: A small school sore is not usually a problem. In fact, it often goes away with just regular washing. But the problem *is* these infections are *very contagious* – they spread very easily from one person to another – just like Carol and her little friend, and just like in my family.

Carol: The best thing we can do is keep them from spreading. So, how do we do that?

Dr K: If you have a school sore, you should make sure it's covered – either with a dressing, or with clothing if it's on your arm or leg. You should wash your hands often, with soap and water and tell anyone you come in close contact with to do the same. This will stop the germs traveling from one person to another on your fingers or hands.

Carol: So when you touch someone with the germ it can spread?

Dr K: Not exactly... if you touch the *sore* or if *they* have touched the sore and then they touch *you* it can spread.

The sore becomes itchy, and children may scratch it, spreading the infection to nearby skin or to other parts of their own body. So this is another reason to cover it...and it's a good idea to cut their fingernails short.

In fact, if your child has school sores it may be best for them not to go to school, or pre-school until the sores have stopped weeping.

If your child is home with no other children and so not able to give it to anyone, it's good to let the skin dry out by taking the dressing off and airing it.

Tammy: So –these germs can be passed on if they touch anything at all.

Dr K: Yes...if one of your children has school sores, it's best for them not to even share toys, as the germs can spread from their hands onto the toys and other children will pick the germs up from the toys.

Other things touching the sore can pick up the germs too, like a piece of clothing or bedding. So if someone in your home has school sores, make sure they don't share clothing that has not been washed, or share a bed with others.

Their sheets, towels and clothes should be washed separately from other washing and, if possible, dried in the sun.

Tammy: That sounds like a lot of work? Why all the fuss?

Dr K: School sores are not really dangerous – just uncomfortable and itchy...but they *can* cause more serious problems. The germs can get into your blood and make you very sick.

Carol: I had no idea that could happen.

Dr K: Yes there are two types of germs, or bacteria, that cause these skin infections – streptococcus and staphylococcus. These can travel to other parts of your body and can cause problems in your lungs, your heart, your bones or your joints. They can affect your kidneys and leave permanent damage. If there is a baby in your home, take special care not to let anyone with school sores touch the baby. A baby's immune system is not well developed and they may become very sick.

Carol: Who usually gets school sores?

Dr K: Anyone can, but they are very common in tropical countries where it's hot and humid and germs like to grow. In warm weather or in tropical countries you may find that 1 or 2 children in every 10 has school sores.

Tammy: Is there a reason why some people have school sores after being exposed and others don't?

Dr K: Often they begin with a break in the skin like scabies, or a wound or cut. This allows germs on your skin, or from someone else, to get in and cause an infection. You are more likely to catch school sores if you live closely with lots of other people, as they can share it with you.

Carol: Hmm, some things you just shouldn't share....

Dr K: That's right! Keeping clean is really important. This is hard if there are not good washing places, like a working shower or pump and plain soap. Wash any cuts with clean water and cover them with a dressing.

Tammy: In just a moment we'll find out how to treat school sores.

Carol: Dr Kerry is with us today on Women of Hope. So tell us, what is the best treatment for school sores?

Dr K: If you only have a small school sore, like yours Carol, it will probably clear up by simply washing it with clean salty water or plain water and soap. You *don't* need expensive antiseptics or anti-bacterial soap. Plain soap is fine. But please do not use sea-water, as that can sometimes have germs.

It's also important to remove the crusts. The best way to do this is to bathe the sore for 20-30 minutes, while wiping the crust away with a clean, wet cloth.

Tammy: Should you go to the doctor or health care worker to be treated?

Dr K: If the school sore does not clear up with washing, and spreads to other parts of the body, you should go to your health care worker. You may need an antibiotic cream to kill the germs.

If the skin becomes red, hot, swollen and sore it could be another skin infection called cellulitis. This can be caused by the same germs travelling further into the skin and will need treatment.

A boil or a lump of pus under the skin can also be caused by the same germs. Applying some pawpaw ointment to the boil can help the germ come to the surface and be released. Many boils, though, need to be cut and drained.

If you are unwell with fevers, lumps in your groin or neck or under your arms...you may have developed a more serious sickness and need medical treatment.

If you are having a lot of skin infections, one after the other, you may have other health problems. These need to be sorted out, so your body's immune system can become strong again to fight the germs.

Tammy: I didn't know that school sores were so common...one or two in every ten children! So it's important to remember how *not* to catch them isn't it!

Carol: Cover your sore and make sure you wash your hands often so you don't pass it on to your family or other people. And remember if your child has a school sore, cover the sore, and wash their clothes and bedding separately.

Dr K: Wash your school sore three times a day with plain soap and water. If you get any more sores, or if the skin becomes red, hot, swollen and sore go and see your health care worker. He or she might need to drain any pus or give you antibiotics.

Carol: Well, thank you, Doctor Kerryn, for coming in today. And thank you for your advice! After this song we're going to hear a story from God's word the Bible about a man with a skin disease.

We've been hearing stories about Jesus Christ, when he was living on earth about 2000 years ago, in the country of Israel during the time of the Roman Empire. And we've been asking ourselves the question: 'Who is Jesus?' A while ago Fran told us about a time when Jesus told a wild storm to stop, and it did; and she told us about how Jesus made an evil spirit go out of a poor boy. So what are you going to tell us about today, Fran?

Fran: Well, we've been talking about skin problems, and today's story is about that. In ancient times people were very scared of skin diseases, such as leprosy. Do you know about leprosy?

Carol: I do know a bit. Leprosy is an infectious disease. It can cause people to lose their fingers and toes because they can't feel any pain there, so they don't realize when they have hurt themselves. It can be cured with medicine now, but in many places, even today, people are afraid of those who have leprosy or other skin diseases. They are called 'unclean', and forced to stay away from other people.

Tammy: Wouldn't that be awful? It's bad enough when you have an infectious disease and have to stay at home for a week or two; imagine if all your life you were sent away, called names, never touched by another human being.

Fran: This is a true story from God's word, the Bible. (Mark 1:40-45, from GNB) Jesus had been preaching and teaching about God in the villages and towns, and he was becoming well known. The Bible says, 'Jesus healed *many* who were sick with all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons.'(Mark 1:34, GNB)

One day a man came to see Jesus. He was suffering from one of these dreaded skin diseases. He didn't dare touch Jesus, but he knelt down on the ground and begged him for help. 'If you want to, you can make me clean', he said. Jesus was filled with pity, and he stretched out his hand and touched the man. 'I do want to,' he answered. 'Be clean!' At once the disease left the man, and his skin looked clean and healthy.

Then Jesus took him aside and spoke seriously to him. 'Listen, don't tell anyone about this, but go to the priest and let him examine you. Then take the offering that

is ordered in the Law of Moses for cases where a dreaded skin disease is cured (Leviticus 14:1-32). This will prove to everyone that you are really cured.'

Fran: Let's stop for a moment and talk about what happened. What was wrong with the man who came to Jesus?...

Tammy: He had a skin disease that people were afraid of.

Carol: So I suppose he would have been sad and lonely as well as sick.

Fran: Yes. So, what did he do?... he knelt down and said...?

Tammy: I think he said, 'If you want to, you can make me *clean*'. Because remember? They called him 'unclean'. He would have felt dirty, not worthy to take his place in the family or the village.

Fran: That's right. And did Jesus want to? Yes, of course he did! Because God's word says that he was filled with pity. That's what Jesus is like - full of pity and compassion.

Carol: But you know what I noticed especially - that Jesus didn't just say, 'Be clean!' He reached out and *touch*ed the man. How would *you* feel if you had been shut out of society for so long...and then someone *wanted* to touch you?...

Tammy: Ohh! I think I would cry with joy...even before the disease went away.

Carol: What a loving, caring thing that was! It showed that Jesus accepted and valued him. Jesus didn't pull back, or send him away. As you said, Fran, that's what Jesus is like!

Fran: He is! Full of compassion! Well, after he healed the man's disease, he gave him some rather strange instructions. Do you remember what they were? Hmmm?...

Tammy: He had to go to the priest and let him check that the disease was really gone. Why would he have to go to the priest?

Fran: The priest served God in the temple, and in some ways he was like a doctor. This was the way a person could be officially declared clean, so that the family and community would feel safe to have him back. When a person was cured, he would

take an offering to the temple to show how thankful he was, and to symbolize that he had been made clean.

Tammy: We don't have to go to a temple these days to be declared well, but we should still feel very thankful. Because, did you know, Jesus wants to make us clean from a more serious condition than a skin disease. We all have a 'sin disease'. We do wrong things and we think wrong things, that make us feel unclean in God's eyes. We need to come to Jesus, like this man did, and ask him to make us clean. He will do that when we admit our sin disease and put our trust and faith in him, and really want to follow him. He makes us worthy to take our place in God's family.

Carol: ...because that's what Jesus is like! Full of compassion!

Fran: So do you think the man kept it to himself? No, the Bible says that he began to spread the news everywhere. Well, would you keep quiet about it? The whole country was talking about Jesus as a great teacher and healer from God (Luke 5:15).

Carol: Well, thank you Fran. Today we have talked about Jesus the compassionate healer. We would like to share a letter from a listener who was also healed by Jesus and wants to tell us about it too. Tammy would you like to read the letter?

Tammy: Yes I'd love to. This is what she said:

'I am the one who was always sick, always weak, and couldn't do anything. However I needed to earn money to support my family. After I accepted Jesus Christ in my life I knew that a blessing had arrived for me. He treated me so well and he healed me! So I can say God is so good in my life.

My faith is not strong, but the *Women of Hope* program is building up my faith in God more and more every day. However, my neighbors give me difficulties in my life. They call me bad names. Without God I might want to get back at them, but God is righteous He changed my life to be humble.'

That was a great letter. I hope you've enjoyed out time together today – we certainly have.

Carol: And I'm sure that by our next visit my chin will be clear and clean! As we end our time today lets remember to pray for each other – and ask God to forgive you if you need him to make you clean. Goodbye and have a great week filled with God's blessings.