

Strong Skin at School

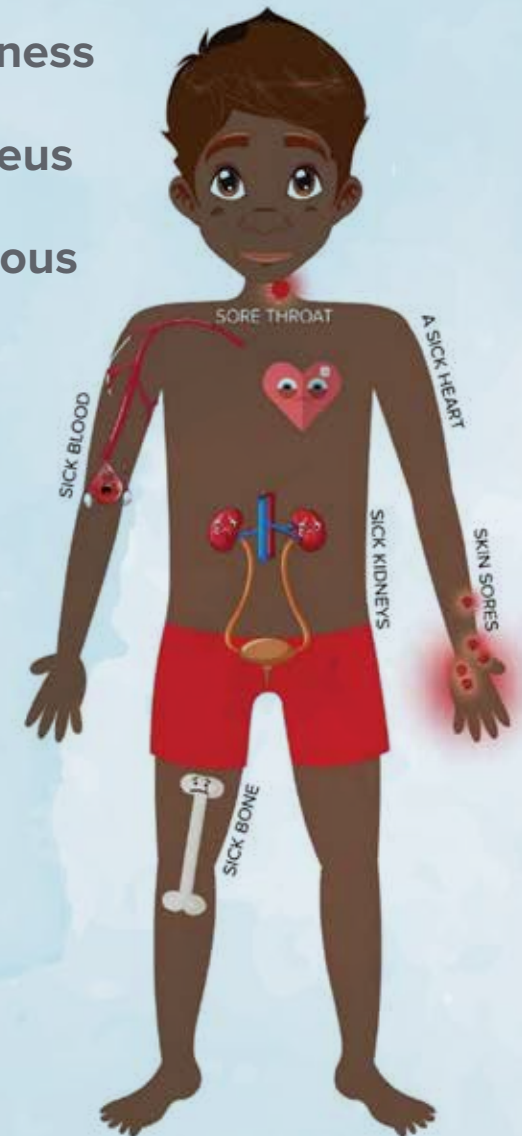
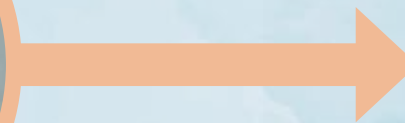
A resource for school staff



**2023
version**

I. Why strong skin is important

- The skin is a physical barrier that protects the body from sickness
- Skin sores are caused by germs called Strep A and Staph aureus
- When these germs get into the body, they can lead to dangerous diseases such as:
 - Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD)
 - Blood poisoning (Sepsis)
 - Kidney Disease (APSGN)
 - Bone and joint infections



2. Keeping skin strong at school

Check

- Regularly check children's skin for infections



Care

- If you notice a skin infection on a child, go to the clinic



- Cover skin infections to stop the spread



- Check that the child received treatment



Clean

- Encourage children to wash hands with soap and water



- Regularly hot water wash towels, clothes and cushions



- Use moisturiser on dry, cracked skin



- Use bush medicines to keep skin strong

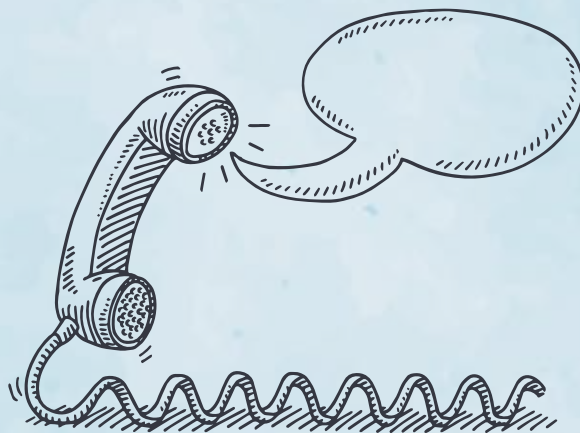


3. What to do if you see skin infections

If you see a child with any of the skin infections mentioned in this resource:



- Cover them up to stop the spread



- Contact school health nurse or clinic staff



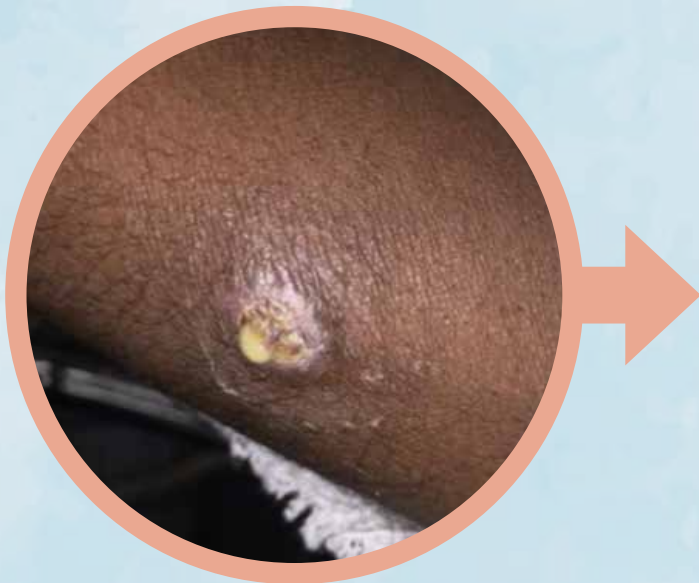
- Contact family to take child to the clinic

4. Skin sores (school sores, impetigo)

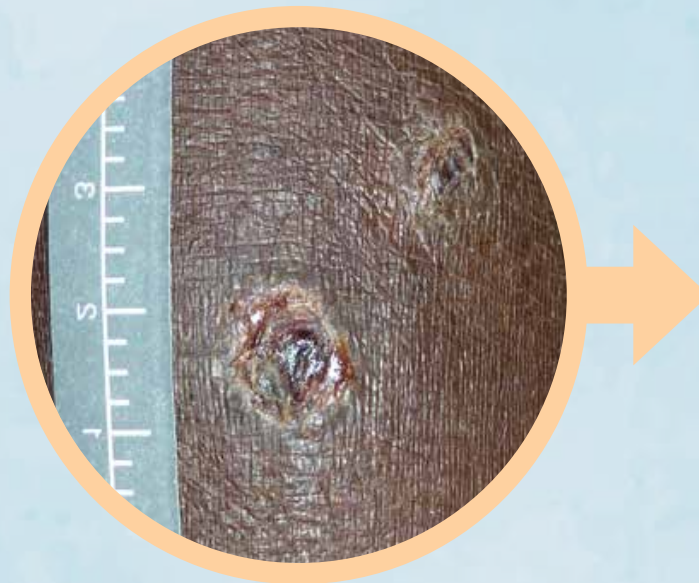
- Round sores with pus or crust on them
- Important to look out for skin sores because they are very common in the Kimberley
- Easily spread between people
- Need to be treated now to prevent dangerous diseases, such as Rheumatic Heart Disease



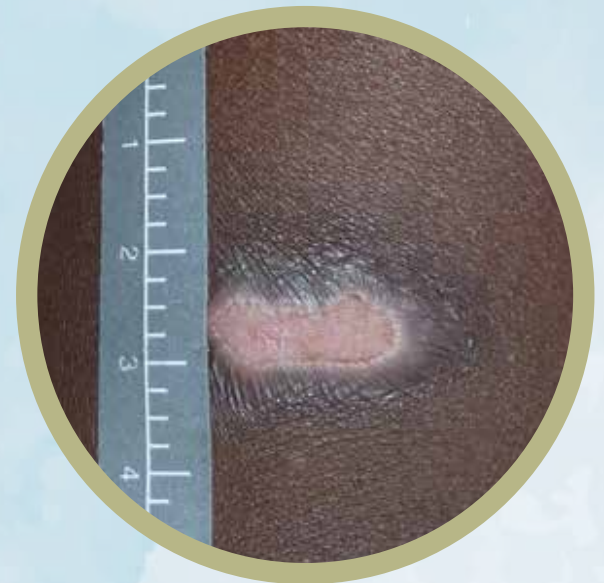
Stages of skin sores



Pus



Crusted

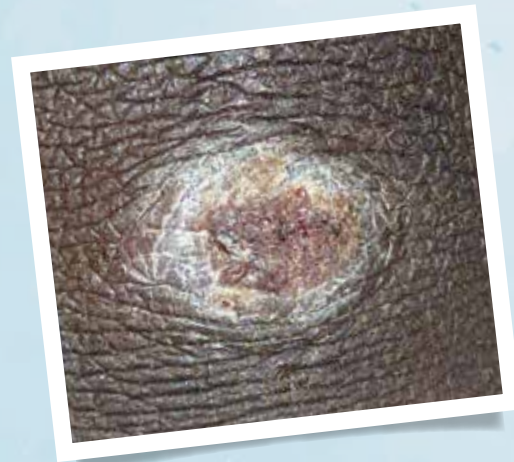
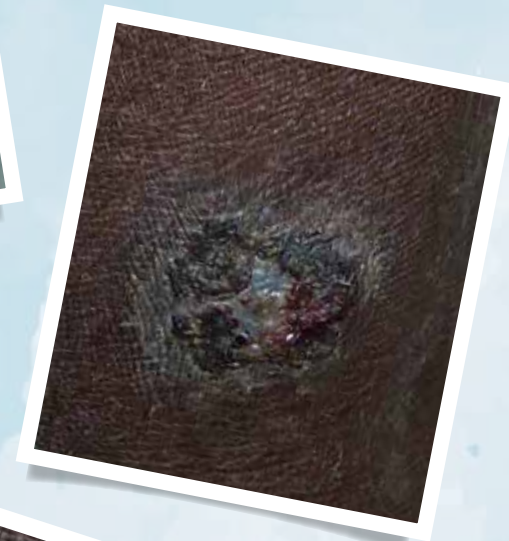
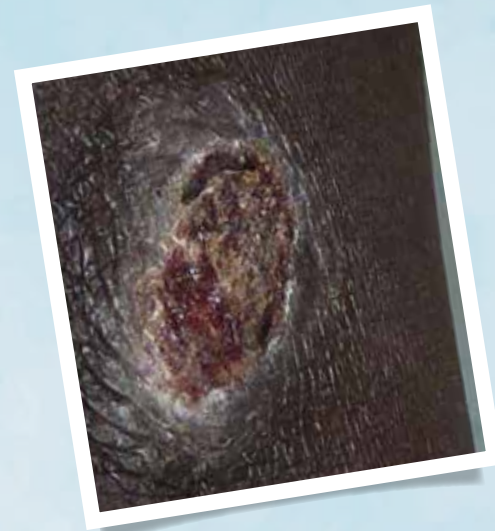


Healing

Skin sores with pus



Crusted skin sores



Healing skin sores



5. Scabies



- Scabies are tiny mites that burrow into the skin and lay eggs
- Often found between fingers and toes, on elbows, knees, wrists and buttocks
- Mites spread easily between people in close contact
- Very itchy, especially at night
- Scratching can lead to superficial bacterial infections, this is called **infected scabies**



Scabies



Skin sores



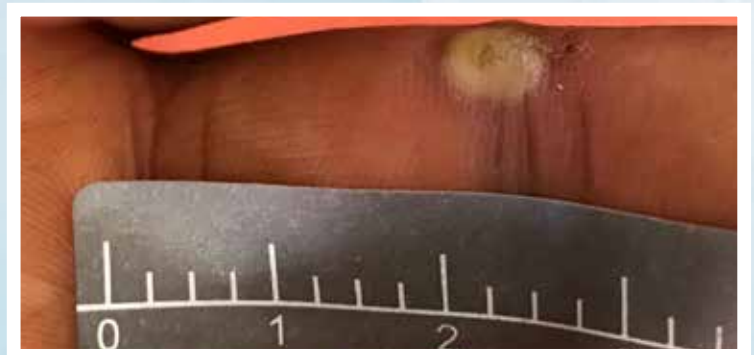
Infected scabies



6. Boils



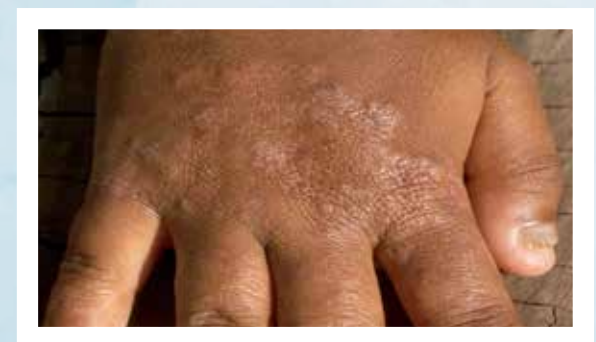
- Boils are swollen, red lumps of pus under the skin
- Caused by germs called ***Staph aureus*** infecting hair follicles
- Often painful and can cause fever
- Easily spread between people
- Without treatment, boils lead to dangerous disease, such as bone and joint infections



7. Tinea (ringworm)



- Fungal infection that affects the skin, hair & nails
- Mainly transmitted between people but can be spread from pets
- On skin, it looks like scaly, often darker, well-defined patches
- Scratching can lead to skin sores and dangerous diseases



8. Headlice (nits, louse)



- Bloodsucking insects that live on the scalp
- Easily spread to others by sharing objects like hats and hairbrushes
- Very itchy and scratching can lead to skin sores and dangerous diseases



Community-driven Skin Health Promotion Resources



There are lots of community driven skin health promotion resources you can access on the Telethon Kids Institute Website.



Background

The See, Treat, Prevent Skin Sores and Scabies (SToP) Trial aimed to improve the awareness, detection and treatment of skin infections in the Kimberley, to prevent the development of complex disease sequelae such as Rheumatic Heart Disease. Operating from 2017 until 2023 in nine Kimberley remote Aboriginal communities, the SToP Trial was a collaboration between Telethon Kids Institute, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services, WA Country Health Services – Kimberley, and Nirrumbuk Environmental Health Services. Luke Riches (Ardyagoon community) painted Gathering Circles (2020; cover art) to tell the SToP Trial story. The circles represent the nine communities participating in the SToP Trial. In Riches' words *"The circles vary in colour and composition, just as the communities hold their own unique identities. The backdrop of pindan orange and coastal blues convey the land and sea setting that makes the Kimberley so beautiful. The dot painted trails show a connection between the communities, of both foot trails and song lines that unite the people"*. The SToP Trial was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), WA Government and Healthway.

The current resource was adapted from *Recognising and Treating Skin Conditions*, produced by the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (now the Lowitja Institute) and the Menzies School of Health Research for the East Arnhem Regional Healthy Skin Project. First developed in 2004 to train healthcare professionals involved in this project, *Recognising and Treating Skin Conditions* was updated in 2009 and has been widely used throughout Australia in both hardcopy and online.

In 2016, Telethon Kids Institute obtained permission from the Lowitja Institute and Menzies School of Health Research to adapt *Recognising and Treating Skin Conditions* into a training tool for school staff involved in the SToP Trial. Now, at the conclusion of the SToP Trial in 2023, the training tool has been modified into the current resource for use more broadly by school staff in communities of the Kimberley.

This resource is aligned with the *National Healthy Skin Guidelines (2023)*, *Kimberley Clinical Protocol – Skin Infections in Children (2019)* and *Keeping Skin Healthy: A Handbook for Community Care Workers (Pilbara, 2019)*.

Citation: Ford A, Schauer A, Thomas HMM, Enkel S, McRae T, Famlonga R, McLoughlin F, Jacky J, Mullane M, Whelan A, Coffin J, Walker R, Bowen AC., *Recognising and Treating Skin Infections: a resource for clinic staff*, Telethon Kids Institute, 2023.



