

Scabies

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- Because you or your child may have been exposed to scabies.
 - For informational purposes only.
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General Information About Scabies

What is scabies?

- Scabies is an infestation of small insects, called mites, that get into a person's skin.
- The female mites dig under the skin, creating tunnels called "burrows" where they lay eggs.
- The mites spread quickly from person to person under crowded conditions where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact between people, such as in schools and child care facilities.
- The mites can live in the environment, away from human skin, for only 2 or 3 days.

Who can get scabies?

- Anyone can get scabies. It is common around the world and affects people of all races and social classes.
- Some groups are at higher risk of getting very sick or developing medical problems, including people:
 - with weakened immune systems.
 - older than 65 years.
 - with conditions that prevent them from being able to feel the itching (spinal cord injury, paralysis, etc.) because it can take longer to identify.

What are the symptoms?

- Severe itching that:
 - occurs where the mites have dug under the skin.
 - is related to an allergic reaction to the mites.
 - can be worse at night.
 - often last for weeks after being treated.
- A rash that has red bumps or blisters that may look like pimples.
- The rash is usually in the folds of skin between fingers, toes, wrists, elbows, armpits, the waistline, thighs, genital area, abdomen, and lower buttocks.
- Children younger than 2 years are more likely to have the rash and infestations on the head, neck, palms of the hands, and soles of the feet.
- Scratching can cause additional sores on the skin that may become infected or lead to other conditions, such as impetigo.

How is it spread?

- The mites can crawl from one person to another. They do not fly or jump.
- For a person to get scabies, their skin needs to be touching the person with scabies long enough for the mites to crawl onto them.

- It can also be spread by sharing common household items such as clothing, towels, and bedding.
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How Do I Know If My Child Has Scabies?

A health care provider can typically diagnose scabies by taking a scraping of the rash, then looking for the mite or mite eggs under a microscope.

If you have additional questions or are concerned your child might have scabies, contact your healthcare provider. This fact sheet provides general information only.

What If My Child Has Scabies?

Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your child has scabies.

How is it treated?

- People with scabies must be seen by a healthcare provider. The healthcare provider will prescribe a lotion and provide instructions on how to use it correctly to treat scabies.

How can I help prevent scabies from spreading?

- The sooner a person with scabies sees a healthcare provider and starts treatment, the less likely it is that the scabies will spread to other people.
 - Items that may have touched the skin of the person with scabies anytime during the 3 days before they started treatment should be cleaned.
 - Wash sheets, pillowcases, and clothing that touched the skin using a hot (130°F [54.4°C]) water cycle and dry on the hottest setting.
 - Items that cannot be washed in a washing machine should be stored in a tightly sealed plastic bag for 4 days since the mites cannot survive away from humans for more than 2 to 3 days.
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Does My Child Need to Stay Home from Child Care?

Yes. Children with scabies need to stay home from child care. They can return to child care after they have completed their treatment.

Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 6th Edition. Page 171-172

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

- Parasites – Scabies. https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/gen_info/faqs.html