

Scabies

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

☐ **because you or your child may have been exposed to scabies.** If you believe your child has developed scabies, contact your medical provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately after the diagnosis has been made.

☐ **for informational purposes only.**

What is scabies?

Scabies is an infestation of the skin caused by a tiny mite. Scabies is common and found worldwide, affecting people of all races and social classes. Scabies spreads quickly under crowded conditions where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact between people, such as in schools and child care facilities. The mites do not fly or jump but can crawl. They can live in the environment for up to three days.

What are the symptoms of scabies?

Symptoms include intense itching (especially at night), sores on the body caused by scratching, and pimple-like irritations or rashes on the skin. Itching occurs in areas where the mites have dug under the skin. Scabies can be found anywhere on the body but are more commonly found on skin folds between the fingers, toes, wrists, elbows, armpits, waistline, thighs, genital areas, abdomen, and lower buttocks.

How is scabies spread?

By direct and prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person already infested with scabies. Sharing common household items such as clothing, towels, and bedding can also spread scabies. It takes about 4-6 weeks for scabies symptoms to appear on the body after being exposed for the first time to scabies. Subsequent infections may appear more rapidly.

Pets become infested with a different type of scabies mite (condition is called mange). These types of mites can cause temporary skin irritation in people, but do not cause scabies.

Who is at risk for getting scabies?

Anybody can get scabies. People with weakened immune systems and the elderly may be at higher risk for severe infection.

How is scabies diagnosed?

Scabies is diagnosed by microscopic identification of the mite or mite eggs from scrapings taken from the infested person.

How is scabies treated?

People infested with scabies must be seen by a physician. The physician will prescribe a lotion used to treat scabies and provide instructions on its proper use.

Child Care Health Program

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Adapted from the Snohomish Health District

How is the spread of scabies reduced?

- People with the infestation should see a doctor as soon as possible after symptoms begin, lessening the chance that the person will pass the scabies onto others.
- All bedding and clothing worn next to the skin during the 3 days before treatment began should be laundered in a washer with hot water and dried using the hottest cycle on the dryer.
- Clothing, stuffed animals, pillows, and any other items that cannot be washed should be stored for 4 days in a tightly sealed plastic bag to avoid re-infestation.

Exclude from group setting?

Children with scabies should be excluded. They can return after treatment has been completed (usually overnight).

Reference:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th Edition. Page 159-160

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

- Parasites – Scabies website

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