

SCABIES

Scabies is an infestation caused by tiny mites that burrow and lay eggs under the skin. If scabies has been reported in the childcare or school setting, parents/guardians should check their child for a rash.

CAUSE *Sarcoptes scabiei*, a mite.

SYMPTOMS Rash consisting of pink bumps or tiny blisters and intense itching, which may be more severe at night. Frequently only scratch marks can be seen. Common locations to see the rash are folds of skin between fingers, around wrists and elbows, and armpits. Other areas where rash may appear are knees, waist, thighs, genital area, abdomen, chest, breasts, and lower portion of buttocks. Infants and young children may be infested on head, neck, palms, and soles of feet.

SPREAD By frequent or prolonged direct contact with the skin of a person with scabies (also during sexual contact) or by sharing bedding, towels, or underclothing of a person with scabies. Mites cannot survive off the human body for more than 3 days and cannot reproduce off the body.

INCUBATION It takes 2 to 6 weeks from the time a person is exposed until symptoms appear. Symptoms may appear in 1 to 4 days if the person has had scabies before.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

From the time a person acquires the mites (before rash appears) until 24 hours after treatment begins.

EXCLUSION Childcare and School: Until after treatment has been completed.

DIAGNOSIS Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if they suspect scabies in their household members. Skin scrapings should be examined to identify the mites.

TREATMENT The healthcare provider will prescribe a medication, usually a cream or lotion. There are several prescription scabicides. **Directions must be followed carefully.**

- Itching and rash may not go away immediately after treatment. It often takes 2 to 3 weeks for rash and itching to go away.
- It is recommended that household members are treated, particularly those with prolonged direct skin-to-skin contact. Other people to consider for treatment are the babysitter, boyfriend/girlfriend, and non-custodial parent.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Wash bedding and towels used in the past 48 hours in hot water and dry in a hot dryer at the time of treatment. Items that cannot be laundered should be sealed in a bag for one week.
- Vacuum upholstered furniture and carpeting (if dealing with case(s) of Norwegian (encrusted) scabies). DO NOT use insecticide sprays.