

SCABIES

WHAT IS SCABIES?

Scabies is common in children. It is caused by tiny insects called mites that burrow just under the surface of the skin. These mites cause a rash that is very itchy especially at night. It may look like white curvy thread-like lines, tiny red bumps or scratch marks. The rash usually appears on the wrists, elbows or between the fingers, but can be anywhere on the body. In infants, the rash may appear on the head, face, neck, chest, abdomen and back.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Scabies is spread to other people very easily by prolonged direct contact with an infected person or contact with clothing or other personal items used by the infected person. The mites cannot live for more than four days off the human skin. If you suspect **SCABIES**, see your doctor.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

- Follow your doctor's advice carefully.
- Treat everyone in the family and close contacts, even if they do not complain of a rash.
- Apply the treatment cream, lotion or spray according to package instructions.
- One treatment usually kills the mites. It is normal for itching to continue for 1-2 weeks after treatment. **DO NOT TREAT AGAIN!**
- If your doctor sees a new rash or live mites 7-10 days after treatment, he or she may order a second treatment.

TO KILL THE SCABIES MITES IN YOUR HOUSE:

- Wash, in very hot water, all clothes, towels and bed linens used in the last two days by the infected person. Dry them in the dryer on the hot cycle for 20 minutes.
- Put all non-washable items (e.g. stuffed toys) in a hot dryer for 30 minutes or have them dry cleaned.
- Vacuum any mattresses used by the infected person. Do not use for 24-48 hours.
- Wash toilet seats, combs and brushes with disinfectant solution (e.g. 4 mL of bleach to 1L of water), then rinse with water.

GOING TO DAY CARE, SCHOOL OR WORK?

Treatment for scabies is usually completed in 8-12 hours. You may return to day care, school or work after completing the treatment.

Parents of children with scabies should tell the school/day nursery and parents of close playmates. The rash and itching will not start for 2-6 weeks in a person who has never had scabies before. If the person has had scabies, reinfestation will cause the rash in 1-4 days.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

Source: Canadian Paediatric Society
Control of Communicable Diseases Manual 18th Edition