

PARENT ALERT

Contagious disease exposure in room _____ on _____.

SCABIES (Sarcoptic Itch, Acariasis)

WHAT IS IT? An infestation of the skin by small insects called mites

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS & SYPTOMS?

- Rash, severe itching (increased at night).
- Itchy red bumps or blisters found on skinfolds between the fingers, toes, wrists, elbows, armpits, waistline, thighs, genital areas, abdomen, and lower buttocks.
- Children younger than 2 years are likely to be infested on the head, neck, palms, and soles of feet or in a diffuse distribution over the body.

HOW CAN YOU CATCH IT? Prolonged and close person-to-person contact.

WHEN CAN YOU CATCH IT?

- Incubation period
 - 4 to 6 weeks for those who have never been infected
 - 1 to 4 days for those who have been previously infected (Repeated exposures tend to be milder but produce symptoms earlier after exposure.)
- Contagious period: Until the insect infestation is treated

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS? Usually none. Sometimes skin irritation from chemicals or over-treatment.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Consult with a medical professional for medication
- Report the infection to the staff member designated by the childcare program/preschool for decision-making and action related to care of ill children.
- Treatment of the affected child and family by a health professional, usually with a cream containing 5% permethrin. Use the medicine exactly as ordered.
- Family members and very close contacts should be treated at the same time as the child, even if no signs or symptoms are present.
- Launder bedding and clothing (hot water and hot drying cycle) worn next to skin during the 3 days before start of treatment.
- Items that cannot be laundered should be placed in plastic bags for at least 4 days. Scabies mites cannot survive away from humans for more than 4 days.
- Wash hands well after care of child.

WHAT WILL THE STAFF DO?

- Alerts possibly exposed family and staff members to watch for symptoms.
- Send home all articles of clothing used by the child.

- Launder bedding and clothing (hot water and hot drying cycle) worn next to skin during the 3 days before start of treatment.
- Items that cannot be laundered should be placed in plastic bags for at least 4 days. Scabies mites cannot survive away from humans for more than 4 days.
- Practice careful hand washing.
- Contact the child's health professional if itching continues for several weeks after treatment. This could represent a reinfestation.

EXCLUDE FROM GROUP SETTING?

- **Yes**, until treatment is completed (usually overnight).

WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO CLASS?

- When the treatment is completed (usually overnight) or until treatment course as prescribed has been completed.
- If treatment is started before the next day, no exclusion is necessary.
- If you have any questions, please contact your childcare center and healthcare provider.

*Adapted from Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide
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