



Scabies

What is it?

Scabies is a condition caused by tiny insects called mites. Scabies is a nuisance, not an infection. The condition is common in children, but anyone can get it. Scabies has nothing to do with cleanliness.

Signs and Symptoms?

The mites that cause scabies burrow into the skin and cause a very itchy rash that gets worse at night. The rash looks like curvy white threads, tiny red bumps, or scratches, and can appear anywhere on the body. It often appears between fingers or around wrists or elbows. On an infant, it can appear on the head, face, neck and body.

How is it spread?

Scabies spreads from person to person by touch, or by contact with clothing or other personal items of someone with scabies.

How can you decrease the spread?

Scabies can be treated with medication recommended by a physician. A child may still be itchy for a few weeks after the treatment has eliminated the mites. This means that the child is reacting to the mites, not that the treatment has failed to get rid of them. Washing the clothes in hot water and then putting them in a hot dryer also helps to get rid of the mites.

Recommended absence

Your child should not return to school or daycare until treatment has been given.

Scabies is **NOT** reportable to the Medical Officer of Health.

For more information, please contact a member of Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit's Infectious Disease Team.

Things parents can do

- Watch your child closely for signs of scabies if another child has it.
- Contact your physician if you think your child has scabies. If the physician determines that your child has scabies, every member of your household will probably have to be treated with medication. Be sure to follow the instructions on the bottle.
- If your child has scabies, wash the child's bed linen, towels and clothes in hot water, and dry in a clothes dryer at the hottest setting.
- If your child has scabies, he or she should not return to the school or child care facility until treatment has been given.
- Use of insecticide sprays for the household is not indicated. Transfer of the scabies mite occurs only through skin-to-skin contact or through contact with objects recently infected.

References

aboutkidshealth.ca

caringforkids.cps.ca

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