

Scabies

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Communicable Disease Division
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Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have recently been exposed to **scabies**. Scabies is a skin condition where a tiny mite burrows under the skin and causes a rash.

What are the symptoms of scabies?

Symptoms include a rash that is very itchy and uncomfortable, especially at night. The rash may look like red bumps or small blisters, and scratch marks from the fingernails are often a common sign. They usually infest the skin folds of the fingers, toes, armpits, elbows, wrists, waistline and abdomen, and the creases of the groin. Children younger than two years are likely to be infested on the head, neck, palms, and soles of feet or in a scattered distribution over the body. It takes about four to six weeks for symptoms to appear for those who have never been infected before. Subsequent infestations may appear within one to four days.

How is scabies spread?

- By direct and prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with someone with scabies
- Sharing common household items such as clothing, towels, and bedding may also spread scabies

How is scabies diagnosed and treated?

A healthcare provider can take a tiny scraping of the skin and look under the microscope for the mites. Scabies is treated with a prescription cream or lotion. A child may return to childcare or school after medical treatment has begun. Family members and very close contacts should be treated at the same time as the child, even if no symptoms are present.

How do you control the spread?

- Launder bedding, towels, pillows, stuffed animals.
- Launder clothing worn next to the skin during the four days before treatment began.
- Use hot water in a washer and then dry using the hot setting.
- Items that cannot be placed in hot water should be dry cleaned or sealed in plastic bags for at least one week.

How do I get more information?

For more information about scabies, contact your healthcare provider or Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at (253) 798-6410 and press "0".