

# CHILD POPULATIONS

Day cares, schools, and places of extracurricular activities for children can often have difficulties managing scabies in their facility. Children typically have direct contact with each other, which can increase the chance of transmission within the facility. Mass panic can easily occur in response to a potential case of scabies. The following information is intended to assist scabies control in child populations.

## Facility Responsibilities

- ▲ Any child with a rash should be referred to a physician for evaluation and diagnosis. Scabies should be suspected when a child has a rash that causes intense itching, especially at night.
- ▲ Children suspected of having scabies on an area of their body that **is not** covered by their clothing should be excluded from contact with others until evaluated by a physician. Children suspected of having scabies on an area of their body that **is** covered by their clothing, can be sent home at the end of their school day. Children allowed to remain in school should be restricted from activities that could result in skin-to-skin contact, such as contact sports and recess.
- ▲ Children who have been diagnosed with scabies should be excluded from school and other extracurricular activities until treatment is complete. If a topical scabicide cream is used (which is applied overnight), children can be readmitted the following day, after treatment completion.
- ▲ Report any outbreak (1 or more children with scabies symptoms) to the local health department of the county in which the facility is located.
- ▲ A designated staff member should develop a contact list of the scabies case. The list should include the child's grade, age, whether symptoms have developed, when parents/guardians were notified, and if physician referral was made.
- ▲ Facility administration should inform parents/guardians who have children in the same classroom or who have children who have had direct contact with a confirmed scabies case, since scabies symptoms may develop as late as 6 weeks after exposure. **Notice should not include the infested student's name.** A sample parental notification letter can be found at the end of this section.
- ▲ A general meeting that addresses the current situation and what measures are being taken to prevent future spread with parents/guardians may assist with preventing mass panic.

### **Control of Transmission**

- ▲ Coordinate with the local health department to identify and implement appropriate measures to cease scabies transmission.
- ▲ Cases must receive scabicide treatment and be followed until the rash is gone and no new lesions appear. If treatment with a scabicide has been effective, the intensity of itching and rash should gradually resolve over a 7-14 day period.
- ▲ If signs and symptoms persist, intensify, or if new lesions are identified within 7-14 days, treatment failure or an alternative diagnosis should be considered. Refer children to their physician for re-evaluation.
- ▲ Failure to properly treat close personal contacts and family members can cause re-infestation. Active surveillance for additional scabies cases should be conducted if re-infestation occurs.

### **Education for Child Population Settings**

- ▲ Education for teachers, care providers, and other staff members about rash illnesses, including scabies, symptoms, treatment, and methods of prevention may reduce transmission risk by allowing for early identification of cases.
- ▲ In-service trainings for administrators, teachers, and other key staff should be a part of yearly continuing health education.
- ▲ Parents should receive information about scabies at the beginning of the school year. A fact sheet that addresses basic signs and symptoms, the person to whom parents/guardians should report possible cases at the facility, and appropriate physician follow-up should be included in the fact sheet.

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian,

**Subject: Scabies Notification**

Your child may have been exposed to scabies. Scabies is a disease of the skin caused by burrowing of the scabies mite. The mite is transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact or through sharing of an infested person's personal items such as clothing or bedding.

Please observe your child for intense itching (especially at night) and rash. The rash can usually be seen in the following places:

- ▲ Between webs and sides of fingers
  - ▲ wrists
  - ▲ elbows
  - ▲ armpits
  - ▲ breasts
  - ▲ waist
  - ▲ thighs
  - ▲ genitalia
  - ▲ lower buttocks
- Infants may experience rash on the:
- ▲ face
  - ▲ scalp
  - ▲ palms of the hands
  - ▲ soles of the feet

Symptoms usually appear within **two to six weeks** after coming in contact with a person who has scabies. Persons who have had scabies before may have symptoms appear within one to four days.

**Treatment Recommendations**

If you are concerned that your child or anyone else in your family may have scabies, please see your family doctor. Your doctor will be able to prescribe medications that can kill the scabies mite. Usually one application of a prescription scabicide is adequate to treat scabies. It is recommended that if your child has scabies, the entire family should be treated. Please discuss this with your doctor.

**Cleaning & Disinfecting**

**Washable items** such as clothing, bedding, and towels can be disinfected by washing the items in hot water and detergent. Wash water temperature should be set to the highest temperature possible. Use the hot setting on the dryer to dry the items *for at least 20 minutes*.

**Non-washable items** such as shoes, coats, jackets, and scarves can be disinfected in one of three ways: 1) place the items in a dryer *for at least 20 minutes* on the hot setting; or 2) seal the items in a plastic bag *for one week (7 days)* at room temperature or hotter; or 3) seal the items in a plastic bag and *freeze them for 12 hours*.

Fumigating rooms and using insecticidal sprays on furniture, infant carriers, child car seats and carpets *are not recommended for cases of common scabies*. Thorough cleaning and vacuuming of these items is sufficient.

**Attendance**

Children who have scabies should be excluded from school and/or extracurricular activities until the treatment has been completed.

Please refer questions to your physician or local county health department.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
School or Day Care Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Public Health Official

Phone: