



THE FACTS: *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. Some people think children get scabies because they have not been washed properly. However, scabies has nothing to do with cleanliness.

What Does it Look Like?

The mite is so small it can only be seen with a magnifying glass. The mites burrow into the skin and cause a very itchy rash. The rash looks like curvy, white threads, tiny red bumps, or scratches, and it can appear anywhere on the body. It usually appears between fingers or around wrists or elbows. On an infant it can appear on the head, face, neck and body. It may take 2-6 weeks after being infected for itching to occur. The only sure way to find out if you have scabies is to see your doctor.

How Does it Spread?

Scabies spreads from person to person by touch or by contact with clothing or other personal items of someone else who had it. The mite does not jump. Mites do not survive for more than 3-4 days without skin contact.

Things Parents Can Do

- Contact your doctor if you think your child has scabies.
- If you or your child is diagnosed with scabies:
 - All household, close personal and sexual contacts within the last month should be treated with medication at the same time. Be sure to follow the instructions on the bottle. Itching may continue for weeks after successful treatment.
 - Children under 2 years of age, pregnant and lactating women and persons with extensive dermatitis must seek their doctor's advice before treatment.
 - Launder all bedding, towels and clothing with direct skin contact used in the previous 48 hours using the hot cycle. Otherwise dry clean articles or remove from body contact for at least 72 hours. Routine cleaning of the environment, especially bed linens and vacuuming upholstered furniture, will aid in eliminating mites.
 - Fumigation of living areas is not necessary.
 - Exclude from school/daycare for 24 hours after treatment.

***For Further Information Contact the Infectious Disease Program at 625-8318
or toll free 1-888-294-6630, ext 8318.***

