

# Scabies



## Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

### What is scabies?

Scabies is a very itchy skin rash caused by a mite. A mite is a tiny insect that you can only see with a microscope. It works its way under the skin and lays eggs. The rash usually:

- Starts in the fingers and toes but may appear other places.
- Is common in skin folds in older children.
- Is common all over a baby's body.
- Is very itchy, especially at night or after a hot bath.

Scabies is very contagious (can be passed from one person to another). It can be spread by:

- Coming in close contact with a person who has active scabies.
- Sharing clothes or linens that have the scabies mites living in them.
- Being in crowded areas, such as daycares, college dorms, or nursing homes. Talk with your child's doctor if someone in your child's class or dorm has scabies.

### What is the treatment?

Some general guidelines for treating scabies may include:

- Apply a special lotion advised by your child's doctor as directed.
- Wash all clothing worn by your child in hot, soapy water. Dry clean anything that cannot be washed.
- Dress your child in freshly washed, clean clothes after treatment with the lotion.
- Change and wash all washable cloth items that your child had contact with several days **before** the rash appeared in hot, soapy water. This includes things like bed linens, sleeping bags and stuffed animals.
- Vacuum all upholstered furniture and carpets in your home and car. Place the vacuum bag in a plastic bag, and throw it away.

### What medicine may the doctor advise?

The doctor may advise a cream that contains 5 percent (5 %) permethrin. Permethrin is a chemical that kills mites. The brand name is called Elimite.

- If so, do not use it on people allergic to chrysanthemum flowers.
- Expect the itching to continue for up to 2 weeks after using the lotion.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

# **Scabies, continued**

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## **How do I apply the cream?**

Follow your child's doctor's directions closely. General directions include:

- Give your child a warm bath or shower in the evening, and shampoo his hair.
  - Dry his skin, and allow him to cool off after bathing.
- Apply the cream from the ears and neck down over entire body, including the palms of his hands and soles of his feet.
  - Do not spread it on the face or head unless the doctor told you to do so.
  - Apply the cream in all folds and creases, between fingers and toes, under fingernails, in the armpits and around the genital area (private parts).
- Put your child in freshly washed, clean pajamas or clothes.
  - Put cotton socks on your child's hands to keep him from rubbing his eyes and mouth.
- Leave the cream on overnight (8 to 14 hours).
  - Put more on his hands if they were washed during the 8 to 14 hour treatment period.
  - Wash the cream off with a shower or bath in the morning.

## **Can I reapply the permethrin cream?**

You may reapply the cream as directed by your child's doctor. The rash and itching may last for up to 2 weeks after treatment, even when all the mites and eggs are gone.

## **Who should be treated?**

- Anyone living in the home who has had contact with the infected child.
- All close contacts, even if they do not have a rash. This helps to prevent the infection from coming back.

## **What is the treatment for itching?**

Your doctor may advise:

- Keep your child's fingernails trimmed to help prevent scratching the skin.
- Cool baths with baking soda or a product such as Aveeno.
- Over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream to **small** areas of the body with the rash.
- A medicine such as Benadryl or less costly store brand to help relieve the itching.

## **When can my child return to school?**

- Tell your child's daycare and school once you find out that your child has scabies.
- Your child can return to school once he has been treated or as advised by his doctor.

## **When should I call the doctor?**

Call your child's doctor if:

- Your child has a skin rash or irritation after using the treatment cream.
- Your child has a fever (temperature over 100.3°F) for more than 2 days.
- The scabies rash lasts more than 2 weeks after treatment.

Also, call if you have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**