

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

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.