

# Facts about Scabies

**Scabies is caused by a tiny mite. Scabies is not an infection, but it may itch and be sore.** If children scratch the rash too much, it may become infected. Scabies is common in children. Some people think children get scabies because they don't wash properly. This is not true.

The mites that cause scabies dig into the skin. This causes a very itchy rash that looks like white threads, tiny red bumps or scratches. The rash can appear anywhere on the body, but is usually found between the fingers or around the wrists and elbows. Babies can get the rash on their heads, face, neck and body.

Mites can live on clothing and other objects for four days. If the clothes or other objects are not touched for four days, the mites will die. Mites can also be killed by washing clothes and personal items in a regular wash cycle and drying in a dryer. Items that cannot be washed can be dry cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for 7 days or put in a hot dryer for 20 minutes to kill the mites.

## How is Scabies Spread?

Scabies is spread from person to person by:

- touching someone with scabies
- touching the clothes, facecloths, towels, sheets, pillows or other personal items of someone with scabies

## Treatment

Scabies can be treated. A doctor will suggest which treatment to use.

**It is important to check with a doctor before children less than one year of age or pregnant women start treatment.**

A child may still be itchy for a few weeks after the treatment has got rid of the scabies. The rash should start to improve in a few days.

A general clean-up and vacuuming is enough to clean the child care centre.

**Outbreak Notification:** If there is more than one case of scabies in a child care centre or school, notify the Licensing Officer or Public Health Nurse.



## What to Do at Home

- If another child has scabies watch your child closely for signs of scabies.
- **Talk to your doctor** if you think your child has scabies.
- If your child has scabies everyone in your household should be treated.
- When treating scabies follow the instructions on the bottle carefully.
- Wash your child's bed sheets, pillow cases, stuffed animals, facecloths, towels and clothes in regular wash cycle in hot water. Dry in a dryer.
- A general clean-up and vacuuming is enough to clean your house.
- Make sure that you tell caregivers at the centre or school, if your child has scabies.



**Children with scabies should be treated before they return to school or the child care centre.**