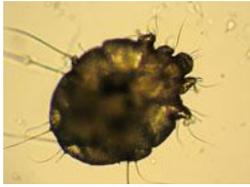


Possible Exposure Notice: Scabies



Infection Prevention and Control
Wiesbaden Army Health Clinic
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Dear Parent:

Your child may have been exposed to scabies within the last 2 weeks. Please read below to find out more and look at your child's skin to see if they are having or develop a pimple-like skin rash with intense itching.

What is scabies? Scabies is an infestation of the skin by the human itch mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*). The most common symptoms of scabies are intense itching and a pimple-like skin rash. The scabies mite usually is spread by direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies. Scabies is found worldwide and affects people of all races and social classes. Scabies can spread rapidly under crowded conditions where close body and skin contact is frequent. Child care facilities are a common site of scabies infestations.

How soon after infestation do symptoms of scabies begin? If a person has never had scabies before, symptoms may take as long as 4-6 weeks to begin. In a person who has had scabies before, symptoms usually appear much sooner (1-4 days) after exposure.

What are the signs and symptoms of scabies infestation?

The most common signs and symptoms of scabies:

- intense itching (pruritus) especially at night,
- pimple-like (papular) itchy rash.

LOCATIONS: wrist, elbow, armpit, webbing between the fingers, nipple, penis, waist, belt-line, and buttocks.

How did I get scabies? Scabies usually is spread by direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies. Contact generally must be prolonged; a quick handshake or hug usually will not spread scabies. Scabies is spread easily to sexual partners and household members. Scabies sometimes is spread indirectly by sharing articles such as clothing, towels, or bedding used by an infested person.

How is scabies infestation diagnosed? Diagnosis of a scabies infestation usually is made based on the customary appearance and distribution of the rash.

How long can scabies mites live? On a person, scabies mites can live for as long as 1-2 months. Off a person, scabies mites usually do not survive more than 48-72 hours. Scabies mites will die if exposed to a temperature of 50°C (122°F) for 10 minutes.

Can scabies be treated? Yes. Products used to treat scabies are called *scabicides* because they kill scabies mites; some also kill eggs. Scabicides to treat human scabies are available only with a doctor's prescription; no "over-the-counter" (non-prescription) products have been tested and approved for humans. Always follow carefully the instructions provided by the doctor and pharmacist, as well as those contained in the box or printed on the label. In addition to the infested person, treatment also is recommended for household members, particularly those who have had prolonged skin-to-skin contact with the infested person. All persons should be treated at the same time in order to prevent reinfestation. Retreatment may be necessary if itching continues more than 2-4 weeks after treatment or if new burrows or rash continue to appear.

How soon after treatment will I feel better? Itching may continue for 2 to 4 weeks after treatment, even if all the mites and eggs are killed. Additional medication may be prescribed to relieve severe itching. If itching continues more than 2-4 weeks or if new burrows or rash continue to appear, retreatment with scabicide may be necessary; seek the advice of a physician.

What to do if you have it or think you have it:

- 1) Make an appointment to **see a doctor** for assessment and treatment (Clinic appointment line 0611-705-6320 / 337-6320).
- 2) All **household members** and other potentially exposed persons **should be treated** at the same time as the infested person to prevent possible reexposure and reinfestation.
- 3) **Machine wash and dry bedding and clothing worn** or used next to the skin using the hot water and hot dryer cycles or be dry-cleaned anytime during the last 3 days before you started treatment.
- 4) Items that cannot be dry-cleaned or laundered can be disinfested by **storing in a closed plastic bag for several days** to a week.
- 5) **Limit contact with others** and remember scabies mites generally do not survive more than 2 to 3 days away from human skin.