

## NOTIFICATION OF SCABIES

(A disease of the skin caused by a small insect called a mite)

This infestation can cause severe itching which can lead to bacterial infections from scratching with dirty hands.

Incubation period: (the time between exposure to the disease and the appearance of symptoms). Two to six weeks before onset of itching after initial exposure. If the child has had the infection before, the itching may begin in one to four days.

Contagious period: (when the disease can be transmitted to another person). The mites can be transmitted to other people until all the mites and the eggs are destroyed by treatment.

Signs and symptoms: This little parasite causes intense itching, particularly at night. You may have a red rash and gray or white, thread-like lines, that are caused by the insect burrowing into the skin. The rash is usually found in between the fingers, the elbows, at the belt-line, on the abdomen, thighs and buttocks.

Treatment: Your doctor will prescribe medication. The medication prescribed will be either a lotion or cream to be applied to the body. All members of the family will need to be treated. Follow your doctor's instructions very carefully. You may need to use the medication a second time before the mites are all dead. Consult with your doctor if you think the medication did not work the first time.

How this disease is spread: The mites are usually spread by direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. But the mites can live for as long as 4 days on bedding and clothing.

Control of cases: If you suspect scabies, notify your doctor immediately. Bedding and clothing worn next to the skin during the 4 days before symptoms should be washed in hot water and dried, using the hot cycle. Articles that cannot be laundered, such as stuffed animals, should be removed and stored in plastic bags for at least a week to avoid a re-infestation. Children diagnosed with scabies may not return to school until 24 hours after the first treatment.

General prevention measures: Encourage your child to wash his hands frequently, to shampoo regularly and to wear clean clothes daily. Advise children not to share or exchange clothing items.