

Daycare centre / school notice to parents

Scabies

Scabies has been identified in our daycare centre / school. To prevent scabies from spreading, we ask you to carefully read the notice below and follow the treatment instructions, if necessary.

If scabies has been spotted in a family member or at a daycare centre or school and your own symptoms match the disease, treatment can be started without seeing a doctor. However, please read the exceptions in chapter When to see a doctor?

Scabies, Patient instruction

Scabies is caused by a 0.4 mm long itch mite. A female itch mite digs a 2 to 15 mm long tunnel in the surface of the skin and lays its eggs there. The development from an egg to a mature itch mite takes about 2 weeks.

Scabies spreads in skin-to-skin contact. Mites crawl from one person to another, especially in the warmth of the bed. For example, infection via bedding is rare. Children can infect each other when they play.

When the mite population is large enough, symptoms appear caused by sensitisation to mites and their secretions. Scabies is infections already before symptoms appear. The first symptom is usually a strong itching at night that begins 3 to 6 weeks from infection. Scratch marks usually appear between the fingers, on the wrists, chest and the intimate area. Irritated skin is often connected to the infection. On closer inspection of the area, tunnels and small blisters are spotted. The tunnels are 2 to 15 mm long and 0.5 mm wide. They are best spotted between the fingers, in male genitalia and in the palms and soles of the feet in children. Scabies is sometimes very difficult to diagnose.

Self-care

- Bedding, towels and other clothes must be washed for 20 minutes in hot water.
- Clothes that cannot be washed can be kept in a closed plastic bag for two weeks.
- Frost and heat effectively destroy mites.

Scabies is treated with a cream containing permethrin that is applied on dry and cool skin from the neck down. Skin is then washed after 8 to 15 hours. If hands are washed during this time, more cream needs to be applied. Sweating must be avoided. The treatment is repeated in 1 to 2 weeks, but one treatment is enough for symptomless contacts.

Children under 2 years of age and elderly people can be treated only with doctor's orders. Permethrin cream must not be used during pregnancy. Possible side-effects include skin irritation and itching. After permethrin treatment, irritated skin can be calmed with a lotion containing hydrocortisone and chlorhexidine.

When to see a doctor?

If:

- Symptoms appear in a young child or an elderly person
- There is cause to suspect a bacterial infection
- Symptoms are strong
- Self-care and self-medication are ineffective

Source: Apteekin itsehoito-opas (www.itsehoito-opas.net) Article: pot00156 (000.336).

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