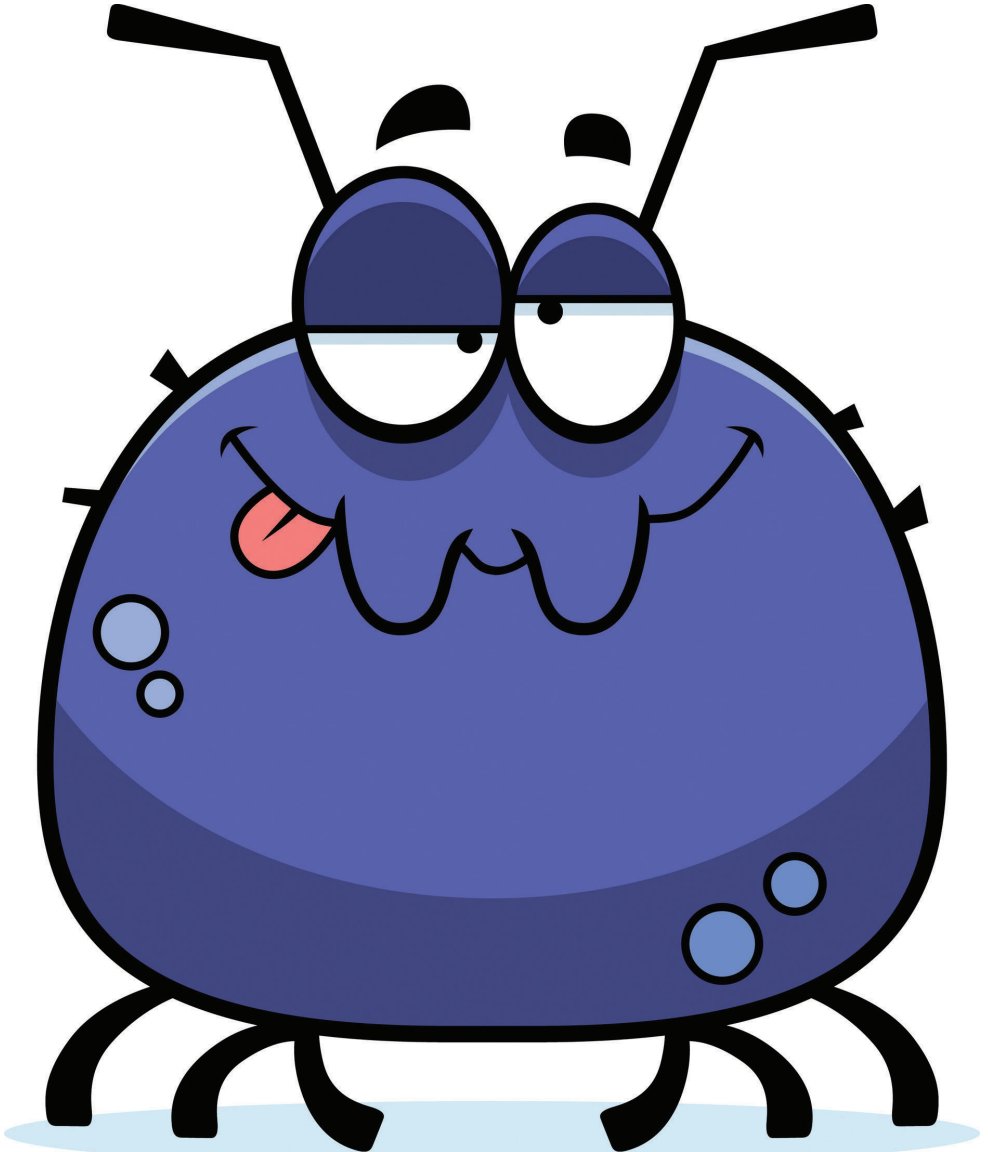




CHU
Sainte-Justine
Le centre hospitalier
universitaire mère-enfant
Université de Montréal

Scabies

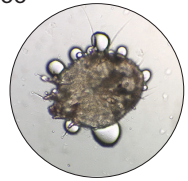
A short practical guide for scabies infestation



This short practical guide aims to help you, as a parent, understand scabies in order to better treat it.

What is scabies?

Scabies has nothing to do with cleanliness and can afflict young and old alike. It is caused by a parasite named *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which is too small to be seen with the naked eye. It digs tunnels under the skin to lay its eggs. The body reacts to its presence, resulting in an irresistible urge to scratch, especially at night or after a hot bath.



It shows up on affected skin as small rosy pimples. In children under two years of age, the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet and the head are often affected. In children over two years of age or in adults, the skin between the fingers and on the feet, belly and navel, wrists, armpits, buttocks, nipples and genitals is especially affected.

3



How did my child get scabies?

Scabies is spread through skin-to-skin contact with an affected person and, much more rarely, through the exchange of clothes, towels or personal items. The rash typically appears about one month after the contact with an affected person.

The parasite that causes scabies cannot jump or fly from person to person. It survives for up to three days when it is not in contact with the human body.

How to get rid of scabies?

4

Your doctor will most often prescribe topical scabicide cream or lotion of permethrin 5%. This cream or lotion should be applied in the evening all over the body, from the soles of the feet to the neck, and be sure to include the spaces between the toes and the fingers, and under the nails. The medication should also be applied to the scalp and face of children under two years of age. The next morning, after a ten-hour application, a shower or bath must be taken to remove the cream or lotion. The same treatment should be repeated seven to ten days later. A moisturizer cream or lotion can be used between the two treatments.

Family members and friends who have close and frequent contact with the child are at significant risk of being infected as well. As it can take up to four to six weeks between contact with the affected person and the onset of symptoms, the entire family should be treated, whether or not they have symptoms. It is important that everyone be treated at the same time; otherwise failure and recurrence are inevitable. Ask your doctor to write out a prescription for the whole family.

Should I notify the daycare and the school that my child has scabies?

Yes, it is important to notify the daycare and the school. This helps to inform people and to identify if there are other children affected. Children with symptoms (itching, pink pimples or scratches on the skin) and children who have had prolonged or repeated skin-to-skin contact with your child should be treated. Recommend that they see a doctor as soon as possible. This will confirm the diagnosis and the right treatment for the child and the family will be prescribed.

Is it normal for the skin to continue to itch?

The treatment of scabies kills mites quickly, within 24 to 48 hours. Unfortunately, itchy skin can persist for up to two to four weeks after an effective treatment, due to drying of the skin caused by the treatment.

Do not repeat the treatment a third time. Where the skin still itches, you can apply cool water compresses followed by a moisturizer, twice a day. If necessary, your doctor will prescribe a medication to prevent scratching and a cortisone cream that will help reduce itching.

Scratching the skin damages it and makes it more likely to be infected by bacteria. To avoid this, encourage your child to wash their hands often. Also keep your child's hands busy with fun games and activities to keep their minds occupied and prevent the child from injury from scratching.

How can I tell if bacteria has infected my child's skin?

5

If your child's skin becomes redder, hot, painful, oozes yellowish fluid, or has yellowish sticky scabs, it may be infected with bacteria.

If so, make an appointment with your doctor, as an antibiotic medication may be necessary.

Should we go back to the doctor after the treatment?

If the skin is still itchy four to six weeks after treatment, make an appointment with your doctor.

How can we prevent scabies coming back?

When treatment is started, wash with hot water all clothes that were used during the four days before treatment. Also wash the bedding and towels of the whole family and dry using the hot setting of the dryer. What cannot be washed with hot water can be dry-cleaned or placed in a sealed plastic bag for three to five days. Vacuum the house and car, and discard the vacuum bag afterwards. It is not necessary to use an insecticide on furniture or in the rooms of the house.

When can my child return to school?

Your child can return to school the day after their first treatment.

If you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to talk to your doctor or nurse.

6

For more information

Website: Naitre et grandir

<http://naitreetgrandir.com>

CHU Sainte-Justine

3175, chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine
Montreal (Quebec) H3T 1C5
Telephone : 514-345-4931

chusj.org

Production

Isabelle Lavoie, nurse , Dermatology Clinic
Julie Leblanc, R2 in Internal Medicine
Dr. Danielle Marcoux, pediatric dermatologist

Collaboration

Josée Lamarche, Nursing Consulting Executive
Jérôme Coulombe, dermatologist

Photos

Department of Medical Photography, CHU Sainte-Justine

Validation

Comité des documents d'information destinés à la clientèle

Printing

CHU Sainte-Justine Printing Office

© CHU Sainte-Justine

F-4703 A GRM: 30011188 (Revised: 05/2022)