

Scabies has been discovered at the school

Your child is part of a class or year group in which a child/employee has contracted scabies – a skin rash caused by mites. In this information letter we explain what the school is doing to stop the infection and what you need to do as parents/guardians. Remember, there is no shame in contracting scabies – anyone can get it.

What the school is doing

- Informing the individual who has been infected and their close contacts at the childcare facility (see definition of close contact below) that they need to start treatment as soon as possible and at the same time.
- Washing or freezing all textiles used by affected groups/departments at the childcare facility (blankets, gloves, hats, stuffed toys, etc.).
- Vacuuming sofas and other fabric furniture in rooms recently used by the infected individual.

If more people become infected in the future, the school will contact the municipal medical officer to clarify whether others at the school need to be treated. Parents and guardians of affected children will be notified by the school.

What is a close contact?

A close contact is someone that the infected individual has had close skin contact with (statistically speaking for longer than 15 minutes) over the last four weeks or someone that the infected individual has shared a bed, clothes or towels with. Family, friends and employees at the childcare facility are examples of close contacts.

For those who have a child who is considered a close contact

- Complete the treatment exactly as prescribed (see link to separate information letter on the next page) regardless of whether or not the child is experiencing any symptoms.
- Keep your child home from school for 24 hours after starting treatment. After this, the infection will be sufficiently under control for the child to return to school.
- Repeat the same treatment and measures after seven days. This is important to ensure that the child does not get re-infected with scabies if they had been infected initially.

For those who have a child who is not considered a close contact

- Monitor the child for any symptoms over the next four weeks.
- Contact your doctor for help and advice if symptoms appear.
- Notify the school if the child develops any symptoms.

For those who have a child who has been infected

- Make sure that any close contacts of the child who do not attend the school (i.e. other friends and family members) are notified that they are close contacts. They should be treated for scabies at the same time as your child – regardless of whether or not they are experiencing any symptoms.
- Scabies does not go away on its own and must always be treated. Complete the treatment exactly as prescribed (see link to separate information letter on the next page).
- Keep your child home from school for 24 hours after starting treatment. After this, the infection will be sufficiently under control for the child to return to school.
- Repeat the same treatment and measures after seven days. This is important to ensure that the scabies does not return.

Symptoms

- Severe itching (often exacerbated at night and when sweating)
- Small bumps or blisters on the skin (often starting on the hands before spreading to larger parts of the body such as fingers, wrists, elbows, waist, thighs and external genitals).
- Papules on the skin (slightly raised skin changes on the surface of the skin) and nodules (small, palpable lumps under the surface of the skin). Nodules on male genitals are a typical symptom of scabies and something to be particularly aware of. Young children under three years of age often develop papules or nodules on the scalp, neck or under the feet.
- It usually takes up to four weeks from contracting scabies until symptoms develop, but it can take only one to three days in individuals who have contracted scabies previously.

How scabies spreads

- Scabies usually spreads through skin contact lasting for a minimum of 15 minutes. Generally, the risk of infection increases in situations where people are in close contact over time.
- Scabies can also spread via towels, bedding, clothing and other textiles recently used by an infected individual.

Treatment for scabies

Information about relevant drugs and how to treat scabies can be found on the NIPH website:

www.fhi.no/treatment-scabies.