

HEALTH NOTES FROM THE SCHOOL NURSES

THIS IS THE FIRST OF OUR MONTHLY "HEALTH NOTES" AND WE HOPE YOU ENJOY IT. IT IS OUR GOAL TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OF HEALTH ISSUES, TOPICS, AND EVENTS TO PROMOTE YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS.

OUR FIRST TOPIC OF THE YEAR IS SCABIES.

WHAT IS SCABIES ?

SCABIES IS CAUSED BY A TINY BURROWING MITE CALLED SARCOPTES SCABIEI.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SCABIES?

- RASH AND INTENSE ITCHING THAT IS ESPECIALLY SEVERE AT NIGHT
- RASH : TINY (1-2MM) RED OR GRAYISH WHITE "THREAD" MARKS THAT OFTEN APPEAR BETWEEN THE FINGERS, ON ELBOWS, HANDS OR WRISTS. THE HEAD, FACE, NECK, PALMS, AND SOLES OFTEN ARE INVOLVED IN YOUNG CHILDREN BUT USUALLY NOT ADULTS AND OLDER CHILDREN.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

IT IS A CONTAGIOUS INFESTATION SPREAD THROUGH **PROLONGED** DIRECT CONTACT WITH SKIN OR THROUGH SHARED BEDDING, TOWELS, AND CLOTHING OF AN INFESTED PERSON. A QUICK HANDSHAKE OR HUG USUALLY WILL NOT SPREAD SCABIES.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

PRODUCTS USED TO KILL SCABIES MITES ARE CALLED SCABICIDES. NO "OVER THE COUNTER" (NON-PRESCRIPTION) PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN TESTED AND APPROVED TO TREAT HUMAN SCABIES. TYPICALLY ONE MUST TAKE A WARM BATH OR SHOWER, AND THEN COVER THE ENTIRE BODY FROM THE NECK DOWN WITH THE CREAM OR LOTION PRESCRIBED...NEVER ON THE FACE. THE MEDICATION IS LEFT ON AS RECOMMENDED ON THE PACKAGE INSERT, THEN WASHED OFF THOROUGHLY WITH SOAP AND WATER. RETREATMENT MAY BE NECESSARY IF ITCHING CONTINUES MORE THAN 2-4 WEEKS AFTER TREATMENT OR IF NEW BURROWS OR RASH CONTINUE TO APPEAR. WASH AND DRY ALL CLOTHES, TOWELS, SHEETS, AND BLANKETS USED IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS. VACUUM ALL CARPETS AND UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE THOROUGHLY.

HOW LONG AFTER TREATMENT WILL I FEEL BETTER?

IF ITCHING CONTINUES MORE THAN 2-4 WEEKS AFTER INITIAL TREATMENT OR IF NEW BURROWS OR RASH CONTINUE TO APPEAR (IF INITIAL TREATMENT INCLUDES MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION OR DOSE, THEN THE 2-4 TIME PERIOD BEGINS AFTER THE LAST APPLICATION OR DOSE), RETREATMENT WITH SCABICIDE MAY BE NECESSARY;SEEK THE ADVICE OF A PHYSICIAN.

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.

IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH SCABIES OR IF I NOTICE AN ITCHY RASH ON MY CHILD SHOULD I NOTIFY THE SCHOOL?

YES, PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL NURSE. CHILDREN WILL BE REFERRED FOR PROMPT TREATMENT IF SCABIES IS EXPECTED AND CAN RETURN TO SCHOOL 8 HOURS/NEXT DAY AFTER PROPER TREATMENT.

