

Guidelines for Scabies Outbreaks in Congregate Settings (Hospitals, Long-Term Care Facility, Prisons, Dormitories, Shelters, Etc.)



Define the Outbreak

Case Definitions:

- **Confirmed case:** An individual who has skin scraping with identified mites, mite eggs, or mite feces.
- **Probable case:** An individual with clinical symptoms of scabies (persistent pruritic rash).
- **Contact of a case:** Anyone with close skin-to-skin contact with a case including household, sexual, and close contacts during one month prior to the onset of symptoms.

Outbreak Definition: Two or more consecutive cases of scabies among residents/staff within four to six weeks of each other.

Incubation Period: Four to eight weeks for first-time infection and one to four days for repeated infection.

Communicability: Two weeks after the original infestation even with asymptomatic individuals. A patient is no longer infectious 24 hours after effective treatment.

When you have an outbreak:

1. Report the outbreak immediately to your local health department.
2. Confirm the diagnosis by doing a skin scraping. Refer to a physician or consult a dermatologist.
3. Begin line listing of ill persons (including residents, staff, and close contacts), complete for the duration of the outbreak until you have no new cases for two incubation periods (eight to 16 weeks).
4. Conduct a thorough search for additional cases.
5. Institute mass education of residents and staff and provide information to visitors and staff family members.
6. Consider holding new admissions to the affected unit(s) until the outbreak is controlled.

To help control the spread of infection:

1. Isolate confirmed and suspected cases under contact precautions and exclude them from social activities until 24 hours after treatment.
2. Treat all close contacts of a case simultaneously to avoid reinfection, including household contacts of ill staff.
3. Treat with the appropriate scabicide. A list of appropriate medications is available at: www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/health_professionals/meds.html.
4. There should be no direct skin-to-skin contact with a case for eight hours after treatment.
5. Ill staff may return to work 24 hours after treatment.
6. Machine wash and dry bedding and clothing of scabies patients using the hot water and hot dryer cycles. Items that cannot be laundered may be placed in sealed plastic bags for seven days.
7. Routine cleaning and vacuuming should provide adequate environmental control.

REMEMBER: Outbreaks are immediately reportable to your local health department.

For questions or additional information, contact the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 304-558-5358 or online at oeeps.wv.gov.