



## SCABIES (THE "ITCH").

Scabies is a contagious condition of the skin accompanied by extreme irritation (itchiness), chiefly at night time, hence its common name "The Itch." Not only school children but adults also are attacked.

It is due to a minute parasite which burrows into the superficial layers of the skin, and may exist also on clothing which comes in contact with the infected part. At night time when the child is warm in bed, the parasite moves about and makes fresh burrows. This causes an almost intolerable itching sensation, and the desire to scratch is so intense that children literally tear themselves with their nails until the skin is broken and bleeds.

In school children, Scabies usually begins on the arms on the inside of the elbow and near the armpit and then spreads to the body. It sometimes starts between the fingers, spreading over the front of the wrist to the inner side of the elbow.

It may be recognised readily by the scratches in these situations and by the intense itchiness at night. It is often mistaken for Eczema which is much less common in children.

Scabies spreads through families, passing from the infected child to others sleeping in the same bed, or using the same towels. Infected children are excluded from school attendance until free from the disease.

### Treatment

Where medical attention is not obtainable, the following directions should be closely followed.

Two different methods of treatment are described hereunder. Both methods are efficacious.

Treatment described under (a) is recommended as it is easier to apply and involves less personal discomfort and staining of clothes than (b).

### SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE THOROUGHNESS WITH WHICH THE TREATMENT IS CARRIED OUT.

The child should be first given a hot bath. After soaking and soaping well for half an hour the affected parts should be scrubbed with a soft brush or loofah.

#### (a) Benzyl Benzoate Treatment

The preparation used in this treatment consists of a solution or emulsion of 25 per cent. benzyl benzoate in benzoin and almond lotion (A.P.F. formula).

This is applied with a firm brush (a shaving brush is very suitable) to every square inch of the body below the neck. Fresh clean garments should then be put on.

The next day the patient should have an ordinary bath, as usual.

The lotion should be applied again in three days' time.

If any spots remain after a week or so, repeat the treatment.

#### (b) Alternative Treatment—Sulphur Ointment

After a hot bath (as described above) sulphur ointment should be freely applied to all parts of the skin, except the scalp and face, old garments being worn next to the skin during the treatment.

On the third night, after a warm bath, the sulphur ointment should again be applied.

On the following morning the child should have a warm bath and put on his ordinary clothes.

If any spots remain after a week or so, repeat the treatment.

Everyone in the household should be treated at the same time, whether other members of the family have symptoms of the complaint or not.



Some sturdy workmen, Johnny Williams, Reuben Gardiner, Neville Landsborough and Malcolm Gardiner, of Tingha.