

Appendix 4. Health literacy demands

Profile 1. Treating skin infections in children at home

Knowledge

Parents and caregivers must understand:

- what skin infections are and how they can affect their child's health
- what causes skin infections and how they can be spread to other members of the family
- the different types of skin infections and their differences and similarities
- the importance of getting plenty of sleep and eating healthy food and drinks in keeping skin healthy and preventing skin infections
- the importance of thorough hand-washing to prevent the spread of skin infections
- the importance of keeping nails cut short to prevent the spread of skin infections
- the importance of not sharing clothing and bed linen if the family has a skin infection
- the importance of washing clothes, towels and sheets regularly to prevent the spread of skin infections
- the importance of not scratching broken skin or sores because this can lead to skin infections
- that any broken skin (e.g. cuts, scratches, insect bites or grazes) needs to be washed with warm water, dried, and covered with a dressing
- that broken skin needs to be monitored daily
- that skin infections in children can be treated at home with daily washing, covering and checking of the infection
- the signs of a skin infection (e.g. not healing, having pus, being red and swollen, growing in size)
- that if the skin is infected, the child needs to see a doctor or nurse immediately
- that if the child has scabies, they need to see a doctor or nurse immediately as the condition needs specialised insecticide cream
- that if their child has a skin infection the doctor or nurse may prescribe a course of antibiotics
- the importance of taking the full course of antibiotics, even if the skin is better
- that if the skin infection does not get better after the antibiotics, or gets worse while taking antibiotics, they need to take the child back to see the doctor or nurse
- how to measure the dosage (equipment they can use to measure this), and why it is important to give their child the right dosage at the times stated on the label (e.g. three times daily).

Skills

Parents and caregivers need to be able to:

- locate and read printed or online information about the relevant skin condition or infection
- discuss skin condition or infection with child and/or other family members in terms of prevention, washing, not sharing clothing, hand-washing and so on
- compare written or verbal information about a particular skin condition or infection with the child's skin, and make a decision about first aid and other treatment
- use numeracy skills to measure whether or not the infection is growing
- use numeracy skills to give correct dosage of any oral medication prescribed
- manage time to regularly check child's broken skin.

Profile 2. Taking a child with a skin infection to a health practitioner for treatment

This profile builds on the knowledge and skills parents and caregivers need for treating skin infections in children at home.

Knowledge

Parents and caregivers must understand:

- that the doctor or nurse will ask questions about their child's skin condition or infection, as well as their child's diet, physical activity and/or home environment e.g. Does your home have insulation?
- that if the skin is infected the doctor or nurse will prescribe antibiotics and why
- what antibiotics are and how they help the skin (and body) heal. This may include side effects of taking antibiotics
- that all the antibiotics must be taken, even if the skin infection gets better before all the antibiotics are taken
- that the parents and caregivers can ask the doctor or nurse any questions they have about their child's skin and how they can treat it at home
- that the parents and caregivers can use this opportunity to ask the doctor or nurse any questions they have about the antibiotic treatment, including what to do if the child does not like taking the antibiotics.

Skills

Parents and caregivers need to be able to:

- discuss the child's/family's skin condition or infection with the doctor or nurse
- listen and answer any questions they are asked
- ask questions about their child's skin and treatment
- clarify their understanding of treatment by paraphrasing, summarising, taking notes and so on
- read any printed or online information they are given by the doctor or nurse
- discuss how to take the antibiotic treatment with the doctor, nurse or pharmacist
- read the medication label
- follow the medication instructions
- use numeracy skills to manage the medications (e.g. amount of medication, frequency or treatment)
- use vocabulary skills and strategies to learn new words and concepts e.g. skin infection, condition and medication.