

Tuesday, 27 August 2024

## ISLHD scabies outbreak over

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) has concluded its public health measures to control the outbreak of scabies across health facilities in the Illawarra.

The number of cases has remained unchanged since Friday 9 August, five days after the commencement of a mass roll-out of precautionary treatment for clinical staff and inpatients at all hospital sites and services across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven.

ISLHD Executive Director Medical Services, Dr Karen Murphy, said a number of factors have confirmed that current transmission has been interrupted after 20 patients and 28 staff were diagnosed with scabies.

“The last case of scabies linked to this outbreak was detected more two weeks ago, and more than 72-hours has now passed since the last of our clinical staff and inpatients had their second dose of preventative medication,” Dr Murphy said.

“This means there has been no further spread and the transmission risk from this outbreak has been mitigated.”

ISLHD Chief Executive Margot Mains said the District’s swift response to this outbreak enabled a rapid containment.

A total of 1154 patients received a course of preventative medication during the outbreak, as well as 3857 clinical staff, students, volunteers and others who have prolonged skin-to-skin contact with patients received preventive medication.

“The management of this outbreak is further proof that the skills developed, and lessons learned by our workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic has better prepared our health services to rapidly and effectively deal with any infectious outbreak,” Ms Mains said.

“I would like to thank the community for their support as we have worked as quickly possible to contain this outbreak. Our staff and inpatients also deserve tremendous acknowledgement for the way they have responded to the call to action.”

“We want to remind locals, while the hospital outbreak is now over, scabies will always remain prevalent in the community, including in schools and care facilities, so we urge people to see their GP if they develop a highly itchy rash.

“Scabies is usually treated effectively with no long-term complications, but the condition can be unpleasant and requires treatment to kill the infestation, much like headlice,” Dr Murphy said.

Further information about scabies can be found on the healthdirect website:  
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/scabies#what-is>