

Health in Shelters

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Medical Problems for Homeless People

<u>CONDITION</u>	<u># TIMES>DOMICILED</u>
Hypertension	2x 4x if alcohol involved
Osteoarthritis/chronic musculoskeletal conditions	<2x
Dental	10% have poor dentition
Chronic GI illnesses	2-3x
Peripheral vascular dz	4-5x
Neurological disorders	much more frequent, even if exclude EtOH related
Chronic pulmonary dzs	6x
Infectious dzs	5-6x as many visits
HIV +	170/100,000 adults
AIDS	230/100,000
TB	968/100,000 adults (50-100x)
STD	2x, female > male
Pregnancy	10% (vs. 7% domiciled)

Infection for Homeless People

- Poorer healing due to:
 - Poor nutrition
 - Substance Abuse
 - Exposure to the elements
 - Other poorly controlled medical problems like diabetes

Tinea corporis (body ringworm)



Tinea capitis (scalp ringworm)



Ringworm (tinea)

- Caused by a fungus infection of the skin.
- Contagious - by direct contact or by touching objects that have skin particles (like combs or hats).
- Does not require exclusion or quarantine, but caution about contact with the infected area.
- Treated with OTC or prescription medications.

Colds, bronchitis, flu

- Caused by viruses mostly, sometimes by bacteria.
- Contagious, mostly by contact with contaminated hands, coughing and sneezing.
- No need to exclude or quarantine, but good handwashing is important, as is covering the mouth when coughing and sneezing.

- Almost always no treatment is needed. Cold medications and tylenol may help symptoms. Occasionally antibiotics may be necessary - watch for high fever, frequent cough with colored phlegm, shortness of breath or severe sore throat, especially with swollen glands.

HIV/AIDS

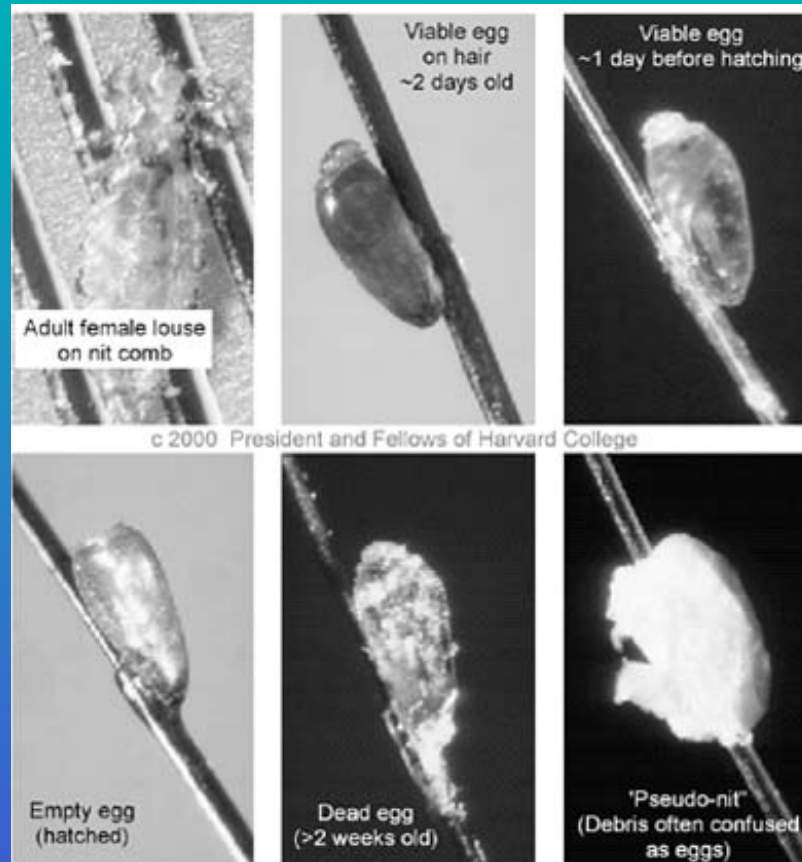
- Caused by a virus. Many other infections and conditions often go along with this.
- Transmitted by direct contact of bloodstream by infected body fluids (blood and semen mostly - and mainly by sexual and needle contact). NOT contagious by casual contact, however care should be taken when there might be contact with any body fluid - use gloves and a 10% bleach solution to disinfect.

- No need to exclude or quarantine.
- Not curable. Can be controlled with prescription medications.

Head lice



nits



Head and Body Lice

- Caused by small insects. They do not jump or fly. They are not carried by animals.
- Head lice are transmitted by contact with lice or eggs to the scalp. Body lice with contact to infested clothing. Crab lice with direct (usually sexual) contact in the genital area.

- A person affected by head or crab lice should be treated immediately with OTC or prescription medication. Since lice are developing some resistance to these treatments, an alternative is to cover the hair with mayonnaise then with a shower cap over night. The nits (eggs) should then be removed completely. During treatment, clothing and bed linens should be washed in hot water or placed for several days in a closed plastic bag.

- Body lice do not require any body treatment (unless bites have become infected) – the lice live in clothing and these must be washed in hot water or closed in a plastic bag for several days to eliminate the lice.
- Other family members and close contacts should be inspected and treated if found to have lice or nits. Everyone should be rechecked in one week.

Bed Bugs

- 3/16ths of an inch oval.
- Can't fly. Can live a year without eating.
- Do not spread illness.
- Hide in tiny crevices – don't live on humans.
- Bite is painless, but then gets inflamed causing a red bump which can itch.
- Check for blood spots on bed linens.
- Probably need an exterminator to eliminate.
- Treat clothing and linens as in lice section.



Tuberculosis (TB)



Tuberculosis (TB)

- Caused by a bacterium.
- Transmitted by droplets produced from coughing or sneezing by an infected person. Very contagious during *active* infection.
- Warning signs: night sweats, weight loss, cough with phlegm.
- A person with warning signs should be examined by a professional immediately. Most infected persons will need to be hospitalized for a while.

- A positive TB skin test alone does not mean infection that can be transmitted and does not require exclusion.
- Good personal hygiene and awareness of the warning signs prevent spread. Can be treated with antibiotics.

Gastroenteritis (Stomach flu)

- Caused by viruses, bacteria, hepatitis A, parasites, food poisoning.
- Generally very contagious, often by poor handwashing after using the bathroom or when handling soiled clothing or diapers.
- Does not require exclusion, but extra carefulness with handwashing and hygiene. During an outbreak in a shelter, it might be wise not to bring new clients in. Sick guests should not be involved with food preparation or kitchen clean-up.

- Treatment usually requires only attention to diet (particularly watching for dehydration), but antibiotics are occasionally necessary.
- Special attention should be paid to prolonged vomiting or diarrhea, blood in the stools or if accompanied by fever.
- Hepatitis A contacts should be treated with immune globulin. The health department will need to be contacted to help stop the spread of this infection.

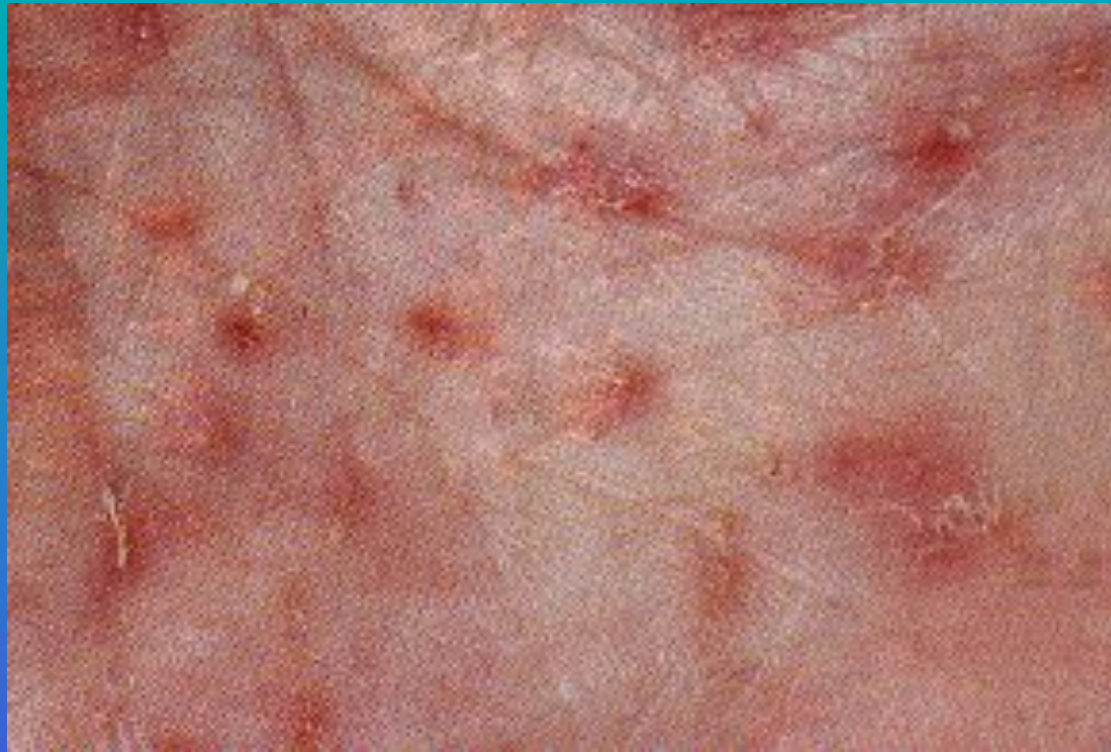
Hepatitis B and C

- Caused by a virus. May cause yellow jaundice.
- Contagious by direct contact into the system by infected blood (often a needle stick but may be transmitted sexually). Unlike HIV, this virus lives a long while on surfaces.
- No need to exclude, but should not be involved in food preparation or clean up during *active* illness.

- Prevented by safer sex, not sharing needles, vaccination for hepatitis B (now a childhood immunization). Do not share toothbrushes, razors. If getting a tattoo, be sure sterile equipment is used. For hepatitis B, sexual contacts should be treated with Immune Globulin and started on vaccination.

- No treatment is available during the early illness. Persons who have had hepatitis B or C may be infectious for life, and the hepatitis may recur. Liver cirrhosis and liver cancer are more common for those who have had hepatitis B or C. Some treatments are used for those with hepatitis that remains active.

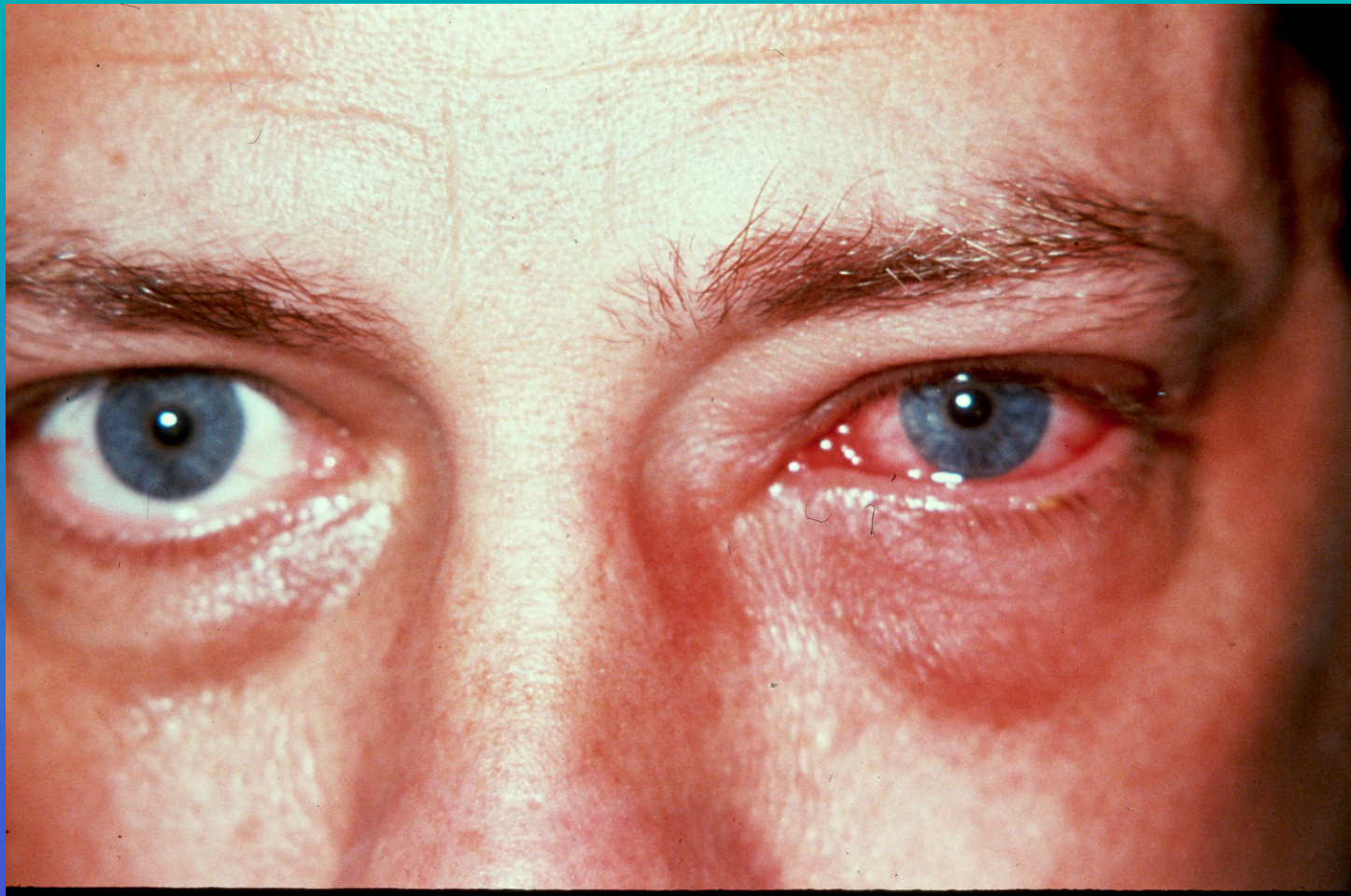
Scabies



Scabies (itch mite)

- Caused by a small “itch mite” .
- Transmitted by contact with infected person or clothing/bed linens.
- Should be treated immediately with prescription lotion or cream. Clothing and bed linens should be washed in hot water or enclosed in a plastic bag for several days. Sexual contacts should be treated. Other family members could be treated or watched for a rash. Itching may persist for several days after treatment.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye)



Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

- Caused by viruses and bacteria. Other illnesses or allergies may also cause a pink eye that is not contagious.
- The infectious form is very contagious. Transmitted by contact with infectious agent on hands, clothing, wash cloths, eye droppers, etc.
- Anyone with a pink eye should be examined by a professional. Often treated with antibiotic eye drops. Must be cautious about hand washing, sharing towels or wash cloths, etc.

Chicken Pox



Varicella (chicken pox and shingles)

- Caused by a virus.
- Very contagious. Transmitted through coughing and sneezing or direct contact of fluid in pox.
- Not usually serious in children, but can be very serious in adults.

- Pregnant women who don't know if they've had chicken pox should avoid any contact with an infected person. If they've had contact, they should inform their OB immediately. Same for those with impaired immune systems (eg., HIV).

- If there is chicken pox in a shelter, new guests should be asked if they've had it before.
- Treatment is available, especially for adults. Immunization is now given to children.

Shingles



Impetigo

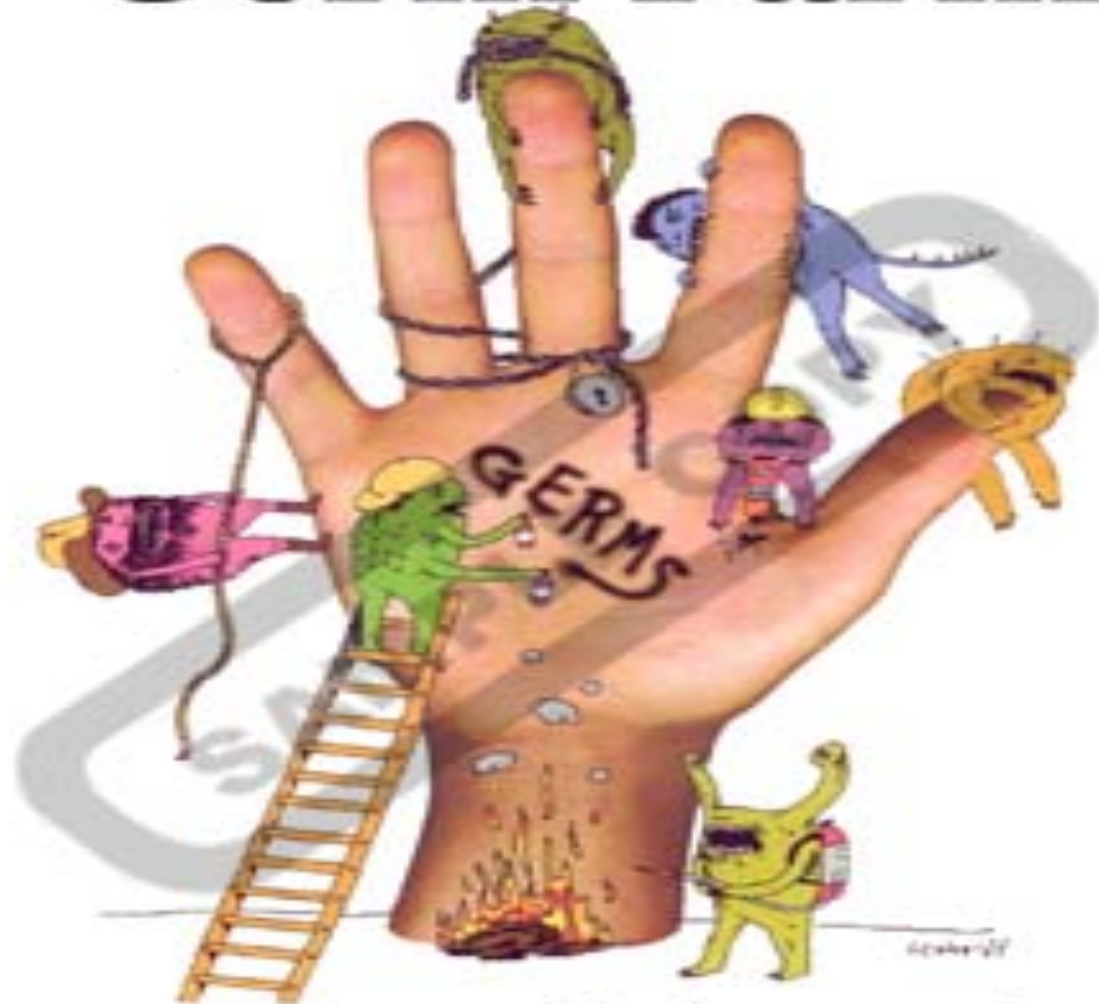


Impetigo

- A skin rash, usually of the face, caused by bacteria.
- Spread by contact with the bacteria from the rash or on hands.
- Treated with oral or topical antibiotics. Is not contagious by 48 hours after starting antibiotics, but they must be taken for a full course to get rid of the infection.

General Prevention Measures

Germ Farm



Scrub'em!

1. Handwashing - adults must supervise children.

WELCOME TO
Henry the Hand's
Homepage!

Help Spread the
Word Not the Germs
By Following ...



Henry the Hand's[®] 4 Principles of Hand Awareness:

1. **WASH** your hands when they are dirty and **BEFORE** eating.
2. **DO NOT** cough into your hands.
3. **DO NOT** sneeze into your hands.
4. Above all, **DO NOT** put your fingers into your eyes, nose or mouth!

2. Disinfect - wash in soapy water then in a bleach solution - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach in 1 gallon water. Mix this solution fresh each day. Clean toys as well as dishes and surfaces. Clothes soiled with body fluids can be washed in detergent and bleach (1 cup per load) if colorfast, or a lysol™-type disinfectant.

3. Bathroom surfaces should be washed in bleach solution daily, floors with lysolTM-type disinfectant twice weekly.

4. Sick people should be encouraged to cover mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing. Have tissues available for clients, and plenty of garbage cans for disposal of soiled ones.

5. Discourage sharing of personal items (eg., combs, make-up, brushes and hats).

Personal items can be disinfected by boiling for ten minutes, soaking overnight in a dilute lysol™-type solution, or soaking one hour in a dilute bleach solution.

6. If in doubt, have the person see a professional rather than risk spread of disease in the shelter.

7. Try to ventilate rooms daily.
Try to have 3 feet between beds, and have guests stay in the same bed each night.

8. Ask mothers if their children are fully immunized.

Emergency Medical Plan

Cincinnati
Center for
Respite Care