



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Scabies is a skin disorder caused by little bugs called mites (the "itch" mite). Scabies is very contagious and can be spread from person to person or by sharing clothing, towels, or bedding. It may take as long as two to six weeks after being exposed for the rash to first appear. Scabies can still be spread during this time.

### FREQUENT SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- A rash with small, very itchy, red bumps or blisters. They may look like pimples. Scabies usually infects the skin of the finger webs, and folds under the arms, breasts, elbows, genitals, and buttocks.
- Sores can form on the skin where it has been scratched.

### CAUSES

A mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*) that burrows into deep skin layers, where the female mite lays her eggs. Eggs grow into adult mites in three weeks. Mites are so tiny that they can only be seen under a microscope. If you scratch the skin area, the mites and eggs get under the fingernails and then get spread to other places in the body.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Living in a place with many other people, such as a school dorm, or living in a place that is not kept clean.
- Children in child care centers.
- Standing close to or touching the skin of a person who has scabies. It can be spread by sexual contact.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Avoid being close to persons or linen and clothing that you suspect may be infected with scabies.
- Keep yourself as clean as possible:
  - Bathe daily, or at least two to three times a week.
  - Wash hands before eating.
  - Wash clothes often.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The skin will usually heal in about two weeks with treatment. The itching can last for up to four weeks even after treatment.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Sores from scratching the itchy skin may become infected with bacteria.
- Severe form of scabies called crusted (or Norwegian) scabies. Person will have thick crusts of skin that contain large number of mites.
- You can be reinfected with scabies.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider can diagnose scabies by looking at the affected skin area. Sometimes the skin may be scraped to gather the mites so they can be viewed under a microscope.
- Treatment is with a drug to be used on the skin.
- Use hot water to wash all clothes, towels, bedding and washable toys used two days before and during treatment. You don't need to clean furniture or floors with special care. Put items you can't wash in plastic bags for two weeks to kill the mites.

### MEDICATIONS

- Several different lotions or creams (called scabicides) can be prescribed for treatment. Infants and pregnant women may need a milder lotion than that used for other family members. These are general directions (follow your health care provider's instructions or read the directions that come with the product):

- Take a bath or shower before applying the lotion.
- Apply from the neck down, and cover the entire body. Wait 15 minutes before dressing.
- Leave lotion on the skin for 8 to 12 hours, then take a bath or shower to remove it.
- Your family or other close contacts should be treated at the same time.
- You may need to repeat the lotion treatment if the rash does not go away in a few weeks or if it gets worse after being treated.
- An oral drug may be prescribed for difficult or severe cases.
- In some cases, an anti-itching drug may be prescribed.

### ACTIVITY

No limits.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of scabies.
- After treatment, the skin shows signs of infection (redness, pus, swelling, or pain).

Special notes:

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More notes on the back of this page ☐