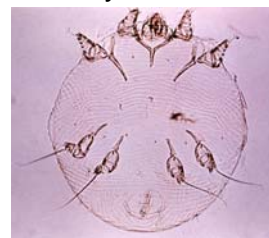


## SCABIES

**WHAT CAUSES SCABIES?** Scabies is caused by a tiny mite (it cannot be seen by the naked eye), which burrows under your skin. The female mite lays three to four eggs daily during her life span of two months. About two weeks after the eggs are laid, the larvae hatch into baby mites, and travel to the skin surface. Once there, the mite feeds on human blood. It can affect people from all walks of life.



**HOW IS SCABIES SPREAD?** Scabies is spread by direct, prolonged skin-to-skin contact with someone who has scabies, or by coming in contact with clothing, bed linens or upholstered furniture used by a person with scabies during the last three days. Brief casual contact like handshakes or hugs will usually not spread scabies. It is not spread from animals to humans. Scabies is contagious until properly treated.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?** Red, pimple-like bumps on the body are present. The bumps may be seen in rows. There is a severe itch, which often becomes worse at night. The rash usually is first seen where the skin-to-skin contact occurred (such as the hands), but it can spread to any part of the body. It is often found on the webbing between the fingers, the skin folds on the wrist, elbow or knee, the skin around the belt line and the front of the armpits. Scratching may result in bacterial infections on the skin.

**HOW SOON AFTER I CATCH SCABIES WILL SYMPTOMS BEGIN?** For people who have never had scabies before, itching starts from 2-6 weeks after the first exposure. For those who have had scabies before, itching can start 1-4 days after re-exposure.



**HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE SCABIES?** An accurate diagnosis by a medical provider is very important because scabies can look like many other skin conditions, including eczema, allergic reactions, insect bites and skin infections.

**IT IS UNWISE** to treat for scabies without a medical diagnosis because the treatment requires the applying of a prescription pesticide lotion directly to the skin.

**HOW IS SCABIES PROPERLY TREATED?** The person with scabies and all people living in the same household (ages 2 months and older) of a person with scabies should be treated with a cream, 5% Permethrin, which can only be prescribed by a medical provider. This treatment may be used once on a pregnant woman. A breast-feeding woman should not breast-feed while being treated.



**HOW SOON WILL I FEEL BETTER AFTER TREATMENT FOR SCABIES?** Treatment for scabies kills the mites and their eggs within 24 hours. Because most of the symptoms are caused by an allergic reaction to the mites, itching may continue for 2-3 weeks after treatment. Continued itching can be treated with lotions and creams and does not mean that the scabies needs to be treated again.

### **WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO THE TREATMENT?**

- **Bathe or shower well.**
- **Apply lotion from chin to toes and leave on for 8-14 hours. Infants should also be treated on scalp, temple and forehead.**
- **Bathe or shower again.**
- **Wash all clothes, bedding, towels, etc. (used by the person with scabies), in HOT water and dry in HOT dryer for 30 minutes. Un-washable items may be placed in a HOT dryer for 30 minutes or placed in a sealed garbage bag for at least 72 hours.**
- **Vacuum mattress, upholstered furniture, car upholstery, rugs and carpet. Vacuuming is the safest and most effective way to prevent the spread of scabies from furniture and carpets. Once away from the body, mites do not survive for more than 48-72 hours. Direct skin contact is the main cause of spread in the school environment. Environmental disinfection other than thorough vacuuming is not needed and could result in exposure to harmful chemicals.**
- **One treatment is usually enough.**
- **Itching may persist for a week or two after treatment.**



### **HOW IS SCABIES PREVENTED?**

- **Avoid skin-to-skin contact with a person with scabies.**
- **Do not share clothing, bath towels, or share a bed with a person with scabies.**

