



# Scabies

## What is scabies?

Scabies is an infestation by tiny mites (small insects) which dig into and lay eggs under the skin.

## What are the symptoms of scabies?

- Intense itching, usually worse at night.
- Reddened, raised lines, bumps, or blisters on the skin, especially in skin folds (between the fingers and toes, on the elbow, under the arms, behind the knees, on the groin, and on the stomach).
- In young children, a rash on the head, neck, palms of hands, soles of feet, or all over the body.

## How serious is scabies?

Scabies is uncomfortable and a nuisance, but not dangerous. (Scratching sometimes leads to bacterial infection of the skin.)

## How does a person get scabies?

Scabies spreads from person to person through skin-to-skin contact. A person can also get scabies from using a towel, bedding, or clothing of a person who is infested with scabies. (People do not get scabies from pets; pets get a different kind of scabies – also known as mange.)

## How long does it take to come down with scabies after a person is exposed?

A person who has never had scabies will have symptoms 4-6 weeks after contact with a person or object infested with scabies. A person who has had scabies before will have symptoms a few days after exposure.

## When is a person with scabies contagious?

A person with scabies is contagious until treated.

## How can I prevent my child or others from coming down with scabies?

- Avoid prolonged skin-to-skin contact with someone with scabies.
- Check for symptoms on everyone who has had skin-to-skin contact with someone with scabies.
- Prevent sharing of unwashed clothing, bedding, washcloths, and towels.
- Wash clothing, bedding, washcloths, and towels used by a person with scabies with hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Include all towels, bedding, and clothing used for at least 4 days before treatment.
- Put cloth items that cannot be washed into a plastic bag and keep bag tightly closed for at least 7 days.
- Vacuum carpets, rugs, and furniture with cloth coverings.

## What is the treatment for scabies?

Scabies is treated with mite-killing creams or lotions. Medication to relieve itching is also often needed. (Please complete a medication authorization form for any anti-itch medication to be applied at child care.) Scabies will not go away without treatment.

## If my child develops scabies, must he/she stay away from childcare?

Yes, until after treatment is completed (usually overnight).