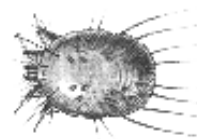


SCABIES

What is scabies?

Scabies is an infestation of the skin with the microscopic mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. (size 0.3 to 0.4mm). Infestation is common, found worldwide, and affects people of all races and social classes. Scabies spreads rapidly under crowded conditions where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact between people.



Scabies Mite

What are the signs and symptoms of scabies infestation?

Pimple-like irritations, burrows or rash of the skin, especially in the webbing between the fingers; the skin folds on the wrist, elbow, or knee; the penis, the breast, or shoulder blades.

Intense itching, especially at night and over most of the body. Sores can be caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected with bacteria.

How do we get scabies?

By direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person already infested with scabies. Contact must be prolonged (a quick handshake or hug will usually not spread infestation). Infestation is easily spread to partners and household members. Infestation may also occur by sharing clothing, towels, and bedding.

How long will mites live?

Mites do not survive more than 48-72 hours if separated from the human body. When living on a person, an adult female mite can live up to a month.

Can pets spread scabies?

No. Pets become infested with a different kind of scabies mite called mange. If your pet is infested with mange, the mite can get under your skin and cause itching and skin irritation for several days, but this mite does not reproduce in humans and no treatment is needed. But, until your pet is successfully treated, this can happen again and again.

How soon after infestation will symptoms begin?

Symptoms may take 4-6 weeks to occur in a person who has never been infested with scabies. For a person who has had scabies, symptoms appear within several days. You never become immune to scabies.

How can I treat scabies?

Seek medical advice. Several lotions are available to treat scabies, but usually these are diluted insecticides and should be handled with care. Always follow the directions provided by the doctor or on the package. Here are some tips:

- The whole family should be treated, even those who have no symptoms. In the case of pregnant women or small children, treat as the doctor advises.
- Apply lotion to a clean dry body from the neck down to the toes and leave overnight (8 hours).
- After 8 hours, take a bath or shower to wash off the lotion. Put on clean clothes.
- Wash all clothes, bedding, and towels used by the infested person during the 2 days before treatment in hot water and preferably dry them using a hot dryer.
- A second treatment of the body with the same lotion may be necessary 7-10 days later. Ask your doctor.
- Keep children away from school for 1 day after treatment

The doctor may prescribe additional medication to relieve itching.

How soon after treatment will I feel better?

Itching may continue for 2-3 weeks, and does not mean that you are still infested. No new burrows or rashes should appear 24-48 hours after effective treatment. Scabies cannot spread after treatment.

What is Norwegian (crusted) scabies?

This is a rare severe form of scabies, which usually affects people with weak immune systems or the elderly.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not a substitute for medical advice.