

Complications of scabies

There are 2 possible complications of scabies, namely 1) secondary infection and 2) crusted scabies

1. Secondary infection

Scabies can sometimes lead to a secondary skin infection if your skin becomes irritated and inflamed due to excessive itching. Antibiotics may be recommended to control a secondary infection.

2. Crusted scabies

This is also known as Norwegian scabies, is a more severe form of scabies where thousands or even millions of scabies mites are present. The increase in the number of mites causes thick, warty crusts to develop on the skin; as a result of which it is often mistaken for psoriasis.

It affects all parts of the body, but unlike normal scabies, the rash associated with crusted scabies usually does not itch.

Crusted scabies affects people with an undeveloped or weakened immune system. This includes:

- infants and young children
- people with neurological disorders (e.g. Parkinson's disease)
- people with Down's Syndrome
- pregnant women and elderly people
- people with conditions such as HIV or AIDS
- people who are taking steroids to treat specific medical conditions
- people who are having chemotherapy treatment.



Infection control

If you have been diagnosed with Scabies:

- Avoid close and prolonged physical contact with others until you have applied the cream or lotion.
- Avoid close contact with other members of your household until their treatment has been completed.
- On the day you first apply the cream or lotion, wash all bed linen, nightwear and towels at a temperature above 50C (12F).

If you're unable to wash certain items, place them in a plastic bag for at least 72 hours after which time the scabies mites will have died.

- In the case of crusted scabies the floors in the house should be thoroughly cleaned and all carpets and furniture vacuumed.
- Children and adults can return to school or work after the first treatment has been completed.
- To prevent reinfection, it is important that all members of your household are treated, as well as
- In the case of genital scabies, any sexual partners you have had over the last six weeks must be treated.
- Refrain from having sexual intercourse or close body contact until you and your partner have both finished the treatment.

**For more information, contact:
Infection Control Officers
Tel (350)200 72266 EXT.2315**



SCABIES



What is Scabies?

Scabies is a contagious skin condition caused by tiny parasites (size 0.3-0.4mm) called **Sarcoptes scabiei**. Infestation is common and affects people of all races and social classes.

How long do Scabies mites live?

Scabies 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.

The mites thrive in warm places such as skin folds, between the fingers, under fingernails, or around the buttock or breast creases. They can also hide under watch straps, bracelets or rings.

How is scabies spread?

Scabies mites spread by direct, prolonged skin-to-skin contact with a person already infested with the mite. A quick handshake or hug will usually not spread the infestation. Infestation is easily spread to partners and other household members and by sharing clothing, towels and bedding.

Scabies infestations can spread quickly because people are usually unaware they have the condition until two to three weeks after the initial infection.

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 irritation for several days. This mite does not reproduce in humans and no treatment is needed. However, until your pet is successfully treated, this can happen again and again.

How soon after infestation will the symptoms begin?

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

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Scabies?

The main symptoms of scabies are intense itching and a rash. The itching is often worse at night, when your skin is warmer. Excessive scratching of the itchy areas can sometimes lead to inflammation or broken skin.

In adults, burrow marks often appear in the following areas:

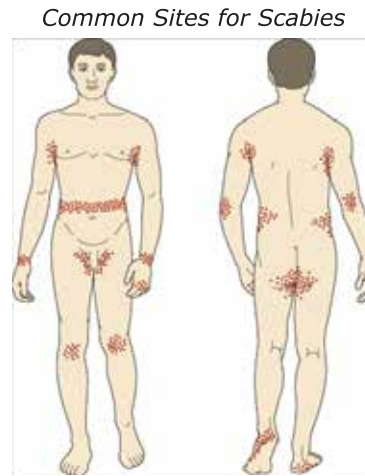
- the skin folds between fingers and toes
- the palms of the hands
- the soles and sides of the feet
- the wrists and elbows
- around the nipples (in women)
- around the genital area (in men)

In infants and young children, you are likely to see burrow marks on the:

- scalp and head
- face and neck
- palms of the hands
- soles of the feet



The rash usually affects the whole body, apart from the head. Sometimes, blisters and pustules (small blisters that contain pus) may also develop on the soles of the feet and palms of the hands.



How is Scabies treated?

There are several lotions available to treat scabies, but usually these are diluted insecticides and must be handled with care. Seek medical advice and follow it. Some tips to follow:

- The whole family should be treated, even those with no symptoms.
- 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 and 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 2nd treatment of the body with the same lotion may be necessary 7-10 days later. Your doctor will advise you.
- Keep children away from school for 1 day after treatment
- Your doctor may prescribe additional medication to relieve itching
- You may need a check-up to ensure that the scabies has gone and that you have not been re-infected.

Can Scabies go away without any treatment?

No, Scabies will not go away without any treatment. If you do delay seeking treatment, you may pass the infection on to someone else.

How soon after treatment will I feel better?

Itching may continue for 2-3 weeks-this 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.



Do I need to have a check-up to see if the Scabies has gone?

You may need a check-up to ensure that the scabies has gone and that you have not been re-infected.

Will having scabies prevent me from having sex?

To help prevent re-infection or passing the infection on to someone else, it is strongly advised that you do not have any sexual intercourse or close body contact with anyone, until you and your partner have completed the treatment and any follow-up treatment

Will having scabies affect my fertility?

No, having scabies does not affect your fertility.

What happens if I get Scabies when I am pregnant or while I am breastfeeding?

You can be treated for scabies while you are pregnant or breastfeeding. However, your doctor will prescribe the appropriate medication and advise you accordingly.

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