

SCABIES

Scabies is an itchy skin condition caused by a tiny, eight-legged burrowing mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. The presence of the mite leads to intense itching in the area of its burrow. The mite that causes Scabies is microscopic and almost impossible to see without a magnifying glass. The female mite burrow just beneath your skin and produces a tunnel in which it deposits eggs. The eggs mature in 21 days, and the new mites work their way to the surface of your skin, where they mature and can spread to other areas of your skin or to the skin of other people. The itching of scabies results from your body's allergic reaction to the mites.

Signs and Symptoms:

Itching, often severe and usually worse at night or after a hot bath. Thin, irregular marks on your skin made up of tiny blisters or bumps. The pencil-like marks or tracks on your skin typically appear between folds of your skin and most often in the webs and sides of the fingers, around the wrists, elbows and armpits, waist, thighs, genitalia, nipples, breasts and lower buttocks. Symptoms appear within 4 to 6 weeks of exposure in previously unexposed persons and 1 to 4 days in repeat exposures.

Contagiousness:

Scabies are spread by direct skin-to- skin contact. Transfer from undergarments or bedclothes can occur only if these have been contaminated by infected people immediately beforehand. Mites can burrow beneath the skin in 2 ½ minutes. Scabies can be transmitted as long as the person remains infected and untreated. Diagnosis of Scabies is usually by the typical appearance of the rash and by examining skin scrapings under a microscope to detect the mite or its eggs.

Treatment:

Bathing and over-the counter preparations won't eliminate scabies. Treatment involves eliminating the scabies infestation with medication available through a physician's prescription. You usually apply the medication all over the body, from your neck down, and leave the medication on for at least eight hours. Although the medication kills the mites promptly, you may find that the itching doesn't subside for several weeks. Because scabies spreads so easily, your doctor may recommend that all family members be treated to prevent re-infestation.

School Exclusion Guidelines:

The child must be excluded from school **until 24 hours of appropriate treatment has been completed.**