

Scabies



What Is It?

Scabies is a skin infection caused by a tiny (microscopic) bug called a mite. The mite burrows into the skin, causing a rash.

What Are the Symptoms?

The skin rash caused by scabies is without accompanying illness. The rash begins as an itchy, raised and usually red rash. Although it is most commonly found around fingers, wrists and belt line, the rash can occur anywhere on the body below the face. In infants and young toddlers, the rash may look different, and can also occur on the face or scalp.

Who Gets It and How?

Only humans carry the mites causing scabies. It can be carried by people from all socioeconomic levels without regard to age, sex or standards of personal hygiene. Because mites can survive only briefly if not on the human body, you can only get scabies from direct contact with another person or by sharing an infected person's clothes. A person may not develop the rash until four to six weeks after exposure.

Over-the-counter insecticide lotion treatments are available for killing the mites. Young children suspected of having scabies should see a health care provider, as should persons with extensive skin disease.

When Should People with this Illness Be Excluded?

If a child is suspected of having scabies, the child should be separated from skin contact with other children for that day. Adult contacts should wash their hands. The child should not return to the group until diagnosed and treated for 24 hours prior to re-entry. Household members should be checked and treated at the same time if necessary.

Where Should I Report It?

Notify any other adults or the parents of children who may have had direct contact with the infected person. Other providers and children and their families may have been infected, and may need treatment.

How Can I Limit the Spread of Scabies?

- Look for the signs of scabies in the morning check, and refer suspected cases for evaluation and treatment.
- Do not share hats and jackets.
- Keep personal clothes and bedding separate.
- Launder clothes, towels and bedding in a machine, and dry in a hot dryer or press with a hot iron.
- For non-washable items, dry clean or seal in a plastic bag for four to seven days.
- Vacuum carpets, upholstered furniture and car seats.