



# SCABIES

## The Itch That Will Go Away!

### What is scabies?

If you have a rash that itches, especially at night when you are warm in bed, you—and the people you live with might have scabies.

Scabies is an itchy skin condition caused by a tiny mite that lives in the skin of human beings. The mite is too small for you to see.

When scabies mites crawl onto your body from an infected person, the male and female mate on your skin. Soon after, the male dies and the female crawls into the top layer of skin. She lays one to three eggs daily for several weeks. In a few days the eggs hatch and come out on the skin to begin a new cycle.

### Why does it itch so much?

The activity of this family of mites in the skin creates an allergic reaction that causes the itching. This allergic itching may last for a week or so after treatment, even though the scabies mites are dead. You can get medicine from your family doctor that will help stop the itching.

### Who gets scabies?

Anyone can get scabies, from tiny tots to their grandparents. Just one person or entire groups of people can become infected. The spread of scabies sometimes happens between:

- children in day-care centers because of close body contact
- groups of people who live in nursing homes or sheltered-care homes
- family members and roommates sexual partners

### How is scabies spread?

Scabies is spread when an infected person is in close contact with another person for a long period of time. It can be spread by:

- using another person's clothing, blankets, sleeping bag, or any other cloth material that has scabies mites
- holding hands for a long time
- sharing a bed
- although you normally won't get scabies from animals, you can occasionally pick up a mild form from your pets.

*If you have scabies, don't be embarrassed.  
This is a common condition that can be treated.*



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## What are the signs of scabies?

The following signs might mean that you or someone in your house has scabies:

- a red itchy rash (other common skin problems also have a rash so this sign alone does not mean scabies)
- very bad itching, especially at night when you are in a warm bed
- a zigzag line just under the skin. These trails are usually in warm moist places of the body, such as between fingers or toes, the elbows, armpits, breasts, groin, penis, and along the beltline. (You won't see the mites, only these trails.)



If you think you might have scabies, see your doctor for a definite diagnosis.

It might take 4 to 6 weeks from the time you first get scabies until you have symptoms. If you get scabies again, you will be more sensitive. The itching will begin almost immediately.

## How do you treat scabies?

With treatment, you won't be itching for long. Your doctor will prescribe a cream or lotion that has medicine in it.

Follow directions carefully when you use it.

Treatment directions will usually include these steps:

- Take a hot, soapy bath or shower, then rinse and dry well.
- Apply medicine to all of the body from the neck down.
- Don't forget places like the bottoms of the feet and between the fingers.
- Leave on medication according to package directions, usually overnight.
- Take a hot, soapy bath or shower to remove medicine.
- Put on clean clothes and change the bedding.
- Wash and dry underwear and bed linens with hot water and hot dryer settings.
- Treat all family members and sexual partners, whether they have obvious scabies or not.

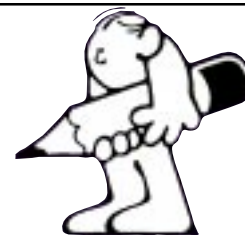
Even though being very clean won't stop you from getting scabies, cleanliness is important for good skin health and so that scratches won't become infected.

Remember to wash your hands and shampoo your hair often. Wear clean clothes each day and don't wear other people's clothes.

### Important reminders about scabies.

If you have a skin condition that itches mostly at night, see a doctor.

- You might itch for a week or two after treatment.
- Try not to scratch. Scratching tears the skin and infection can develop.
- Follow treatment directions carefully.
- Scabies mites don't jump from one person to another.
- You need to be with an infected person for a long time to catch scabies.



**For more information  
call  
at (619) 515-6620.**

