

Scabies

1. What is Scabies?

Scabies is a skin infestation caused by human itch mites (tiny bugs). Mites crawl under a person's skin and lay eggs. Scabies infestations often happen in crowded places where close body and skin contact is frequent (such as nursing homes, prisons, childcare centers). Scabies is found worldwide and affects people of all races and social classes.

2. How does Scabies spread?

Scabies usually spreads from having frequent and direct skin on skin contact with a person already infested with Scabies, including sexual partners and household members. Healthcare workers may get infested through skin contact with patients with undiagnosed scabies. Scabies may also spread through contact with an infested person's clothing, bedding or other items.

3. What are the signs of Scabies?

The most common sign of scabies is deep itching (mostly at night). A person with scabies can also get a pimple-like itchy rash and thin pencil-mark lines on their skin. These signs can start to show about 4 to 6 weeks after becoming infested with scabies .

4. How is Scabies treated?

A special medicine (a cream or lotion) prescribed by a doctor is needed to kill the mites. Over-the-counter anti-itch products don't kill the mites. The medicine must be applied over the person's entire body. In addition, all clothing, bedding, and other items that came in contact with the person with scabies need to be cleaned using hot washer and dryer cycles. If someone in your house has scabies, everyone who lives there also should be treated at the same time. Itching may continue 2 to 4 weeks after treatment.

5. How can you prevent the spread of Scabies?

- Avoid prolonged direct touching of the skin and belongings (clothing, bedding) of people who have scabies.
- All infested items like bedding and clothing should be cleaned using hot water and dryer cycles. Put items that can't be washed or cleaned in a closed plastic bag for 7 days to kill the mites.
- Clean and vacuum all rooms that were used by a person with scabies.
- Medical treatment is needed for all household members, even if they aren't itching or don't have a skin rash.



Key Points:

- Scabies usually spreads through frequent and direct skin on skin contact with a person who has scabies.
- A prescribed medicine is needed to treat scabies. If you feel deep itching, see a doctor to be tested for scabies.
- It is important to wash all items that belong to a person with scabies using hot water and a hot dryer cycle.
- Itching may continue 2 to 4 weeks after treatment for scabies.

For more information:

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/SCABIES.htm>

California Department of
Public Health
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/diseases/Pages/SCABIES.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/SCABIES>