



1. What is scabies?

Scabies is an infestation of the skin that is caused by tiny bugs (also called mites) that crawl under your skin and lay eggs.

2. How do you get scabies?

Scabies is highly contagious. It can be spread by skin-to-skin sexual contact and by nonsexual direct contact, such as sharing sheets, towels or clothes that belong to someone who has scabies.

3. How do you know if you have scabies?

Scabies causes intense itching. It is usually found on your hands (between the fingers), wrists, elbows, armpits and arms, waist, thighs, around the genitals (penis, vagina, or buttocks) and the feet/ankles. You might see small red bumps or lines on the skin where the mites have been.

Symptoms usually appear about 2 to 6 weeks after contact with an infested person.

4. What problems does scabies cause if it is not treated?

Intense scratching can break your skin and cause secondary bacterial infections and scarring.

5. How do you get tested for scabies?

Your health care provider can test for scabies by scraping your skin to look for mites, eggs, or mite fecal matter.

6. How is scabies treated?

A health care provider can prescribe medication that you put all over your body to kill the mites. Use hot cycles to wash and dry all clothes, sheets and towels used in the past two weeks. Everyone in your home should be treated for scabies.

7. How can scabies be prevented?

- Avoid physical contact with infected persons and their belongings, especially clothing and bedding.
- Limit the number of sex partners or intimate contacts to lower your chance of getting infected.
- Treat all family and household members who had skin contact with an infected person, whether or not they are itching or have a rash.

Sources

1. *Scabies*. L.A. Department of Public Health. <http://www.lapublichealth.org/std/>
2. *Scabies*. Directors of Health Promotion and Education. <http://www.dhpe.org/infect/scabies.html>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.