

SKIN SERIOUSLY.

Condition: Scabies

Scabies is a skin infestation by a microscopic mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. This mite is very common, found worldwide, and affects people of all races and social classes. Scabies spreads very rapidly especially under crowded conditions like in hospitals, institutions, daycare centers, and nursing homes, where skin-to-skin contact between persons is frequent. Contact must be prolonged. Generally a quick handshake or a hug will usually not spread infestation. Scabies is easily spread to sexual partners and household members. Infestations also happen by sharing clothing, towels, and bedding. Elderly persons and people with weakened immune systems are at risk for a more severe form of scabies, called Norwegian or crusted scabies.

Pets become infested with a different kind of scabies mite called mange which can burrow into your skin and cause itching and skin irritation symptoms. Though your pet must be treated, this type of infestation does not require special medication.

For first time infestations, symptoms may take 4-6 weeks to develop. For a person who has had scabies previously, symptoms may appear within several days. You do not become immune to an infestation.

Symptoms *may* include:

- Pimple-like irritations, burrows or rash of the skin, primarily in the webbing between the fingers and skin folds on the wrist. Other areas include the skin folds of the elbow, or knee; the penis, the breast, or shoulder blades
- Intense itching, especially at night, covering most of the body
- Sores on the body due to scratching which can sometimes become infected with bacteria

What *your doctor* can do:

- Diagnose the infestation by asking about your symptoms and performing a physical exam to review burrows and skin rash for mite eggs.
- Collect a skin scraping or skin biopsy to look for eggs, mites or fecal matter.
- Prescribe lotions and creams to treat the scabies infestation.
- Prescribe anti-itch medications to help limit scratching.
- Recommend that anyone who has been diagnosed with scabies along with anyone with whom they have had close, prolonged skin contact including sexual partners and family members receive the same treatment at the same time to prevent re-infestation.

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Hours:
Monday:
12:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Tuesday - Friday:
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

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What *you* can do:

- Apply topical medication to affected site as directed by your doctor.
- Evaluate site for signs of *infection* (a fever, pus discharge, increased redness, pain or inflammation).
- Before applying any skin lotion, read the directions on the package insert.
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions; ask questions if unclear about any treatment.
- Wash all contaminated clothing, towels and bed linen used 2 days prior to starting treatment in the hot cycle of the washing machine and dry in hot cycle of dryer. Repeat washing/drying as above daily for 2 days after starting treatment. Anything you cannot wash tie up in a garbage bag for 2 weeks.
- Pregnant women and children are often treated with milder anti-scabies medicines

Some general treatment guidelines include:

- Take a shower or bath before applying.
- Shake lotions well before applying.
- Apply lotion/cream to body from the neck down to the toes, including folds and creases.
- Trim fingernails short and then apply cream or lotion under fingernails to treat scabies mites hidden there. Use an old toothbrush to apply the cream or lotion under the fingernails. Wrap toothbrush in paper, seal in plastic bag and dispose of it.
- Take a cleansing bath or shower to remove the lotion after the last application.
- Sometimes a second application is necessary after 24 hours - 48 hours; ask your doctor if this is necessary.

Preventative Measures:

- Avoid crowded conditions, especially elderly persons or persons with weakened immune systems.
- Practice good hand washing if living and/or working in crowded environments.
- Continue to wash daily all contaminated clothing, bedding, and towels in hot water and dry using hot cycle in dryer to prevent re-infestation for 2 days after starting treatment.
- Assure that all persons who have had prolonged contact with the infested person receive treatment to prevent re-infestation.

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