

SCABIES INFORMATION SHEET



What is Scabies?

It is a skin problem which is caused by a tiny parasite (mite) which burrows into the skin.

What are the Symptoms?

There may be no symptoms for the first 2-4 weeks after catching scabies for the first time, but if a person has had scabies before the rash may appear within a few days.

An allergic type rash anywhere on the body, but often on the fingers, wrists, around the waist and on the buttocks.

Itching - particularly at night or after hot baths.

How is Scabies caught?

From prolonged skin to skin contact.

Often hand to hand contact - 80% of infections are confined to hands.

It is **NOT** a condition caused by poor hygiene.

It is **NOT** usually spread by clothes, bedding or towels.

Who can it affect?

ANYONE who has had close personal contact with someone infected by the scabies mite. So it is important that family members, close friends and sexual contacts of someone infected by scabies are treated even if they do not have any symptoms or itching.

How do you treat Scabies?

By treatment with a lotion or cream that can be obtained from your pharmacist or on prescription from your doctor.

You should obtain enough to enable **two applications, one week apart**.

The lotion or cream is applied to **every area of the body**, including the face and head. When applying treatment to the face it is important to avoid the eyes and mouth.

Particular attention should be paid to the toes, fingers, the private parts and areas where the rash is seen.

It should be left on for between 8 - 24 hours depending on which preparation is used (follow the manufacturer's instruction leaflet).

Reapply the treatment to hands (or other areas of the body) if washed during this contact period.

Itching may persist for some weeks after completing the treatment. This can be relieved by Calamine Lotion or see your doctor or pharmacist to advise on creams or anti-histamines to reduce this irritation.

ALL close family and 'skin to skin' contacts must be treated at the same time to prevent re-infection. Even if symptoms are not evident.

Do not be embarrassed to tell all close family/friends and other close contacts as Scabies is **NOT** a condition of poor hygiene.

CLOTHING AND BED LINEN DO NOT SPREAD SCABIES

Do you need to stay off work or school?
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Once the correct cream/lotion has been used there is no need to stay off work or school (i.e. can return after the first application).

It is important to inform all close contacts as they will require treatment as well, even if they have no symptoms or itching.