



CINCINNATI HEALTH DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

SCABIES INFORMATION SHEET

What Is Scabies?

Scabies is a fairly common condition of the skin caused by a tiny mite, sometimes called the “itch mite.” Scabies mites burrow under the skin, causing little irritations, bumps, or marks that look like lines or burrows. Occasionally, secondary bacterial infections may occur.

Who gets Scabies?

Scabies can affect all people without regard to age, sex, race, or standards of personal hygiene. Outbreaks can occur anywhere but often occur in health care facilities, institutions, and child care centers.

How is Scabies spread?

Scabies mites are most commonly transferred by direct skin-to-skin contact but can occasionally be transferred through clothing or bedding. People cannot get scabies from animals.

What are the symptoms of Scabies?

The most common symptom of scabies is intense itching, especially at night. The areas of the skin most often affected by scabies include between and on the fingers, around the wrists, elbows and armpits, waist, thighs, private parts, nipples, breasts, lower buttocks, and feet.

How soon do symptoms occur?

After exposure, symptoms will usually appear in 2-6 weeks in people who have never been exposed to scabies infestations. People who have had previous infestation with scabies mites may show symptoms and begin itching within 1-4 days after re-exposure.

When and for how long can a person spread Scabies?

A person is able to spread scabies until the mites and eggs are killed by treatment. Individuals with scabies **should not attend school, day care or work until the day after treatment is begun.**

What is the treatment for Scabies?

- Medicated skin lotions are available with a doctor's prescription. The lotion is applied to the whole body except the head and neck, making sure to get between fingers and toes and under nails. It is left on for 8-12 hours, after which it is thoroughly washed off. With infants, the head and neck are also treated.
- All household contacts need to be treated on the same day.
- Clothing and bedding should be washed in hot, soapy water at the same time as treatment of the individual.
- Clothing and/or bedding may also be sealed in plastic bags for 7-10 days, during which time scabies mites and eggs will die.
- Treatment may need to be repeated in 7-10 days. Sometimes itching may persist for 1-2 weeks after treatment.
- **It is not necessary to spray, fumigate, or otherwise chemically treat the home, school or day care center for scabies.**

What can be done to prevent the spread of scabies to other family members and friends?

- Avoid physical contact with infested individuals and their belongings, specifically clothing and bedding.
- Wash exposed skin, especially hands and arms, immediately after physically contacting infested people and their clothing and bedding.
- Use medication exactly as directed.

REMEMBER: GOOD HANDWASHING

HELPS PREVENT

THE SPREAD OF

ILLNESS AND DISEASE