



SCABIES

What is Scabies?

Scabies is a skin condition caused by the scabies mite that causes small raised red spots marked by itching. The mite burrows under the skin and is so small that you can hardly see it with the naked eye.

What are the symptoms?

- Intense Itching- especially at night
- Small bumps or rashes that appear in curly-looking lines; usually found between the fingers, on buttocks, breasts, wrists, and thighs, around the belly button, and on the penis.
- It usually takes 3-4 weeks for the symptoms to develop.

How is scabies treated?

Scabies is generally treated with a prescription cream or lotion, however sometimes oral medication is necessary. The most commonly used cream is Permethrin that is applied twice, one week apart. Everyone should be treated at the same time, so the mites do not pass back to a treated person.

Who needs treatment?

Everyone who has scabies needs 2 treatments, one week apart. All household members or close contacts should be treated. Even those with no rash or itch should have at least 1 treatment since it may take 3-4 weeks for the symptoms to develop.

How do I apply the cream?

- The treatment is best applied at night before going to bed. Take off all your clothes, watches, and rings. Make sure your skin is clean, dry, and cool. Apply the cream/lotion to the whole body below the jawline, taking special care to get in the skin creases of the body. Pay particular attention to skin between the fingers, toes, under the nails, and behind the ears. In some cases, the treatment may need to extend to the scalp, neck, face, and ears. Check with your provider if this may apply to you or your family.
- Allow the cream/lotion to dry for 10-15 minutes before getting dressed. Apply the cream/lotion to the soles of your feet after the body treatment has dried. Go to sleep and leave the cream/lotion in place for 8 hours. Rinse cream/lotion off in the morning. Once everything is washed off, a shower/bath may be taken. Once your first treatment is complete, you may return to work or school safely. Treatment should be applied again one week later.

Will the itching stop after I complete my first treatment?

Itching may last for 2-3 weeks after full treatment. You may use an anti-itch cream if needed. Do not be tempted to apply further anti-scabies cream, as this may aggravate the irritation. This skin will need time for the rash to settle down. If fresh spots appear, return to the office for further treatment.

What about my bedding and clothing?

Scabies cannot live off an infected individual for more than 8 hours. Therefore, all recently worn clothing and bedding should be washed in hot water.

Reference: Dept of Public Health & Dept of Infection Prevention and Control Nursing, NSE South, June 2011