

What is scabies?

Scabies is a fairly common condition of the skin caused by a microscopic mite. Mites (female) that cause scabies burrow into the upper layer of the skin producing pimple-like irritations and severe itching. Occasionally bacterial infections may occur following intense scratching at the site of the burrow.

What are the symptoms?

The most prominent symptom of scabies is intense itching, particularly at night. The areas of the skin most affected by scabies include the webs and sides of the fingers, around the wrists, elbows and armpits, waist, thighs, genitalia, abdomen and lower buttocks. In infants younger than two years old the symptoms are likely to appear on the head, neck, hands and feet.

How long does this disease last?

An individual is able to spread scabies until mites and eggs are destroyed, usually after one treatment with an effective anti-scabies medication.

How is scabies spread?

Mites that cause scabies are transferred by direct skin-to-skin contact with an individual infested with scabies. In severe cases indirect transfer from undergarments or bedclothes can occur only if these have been contaminated by an infected individual immediately beforehand.

Who is at risk for scabies infection?

Scabies infestations can affect people from all socioeconomic levels without regard to age, sex, race or standards of personal hygiene. Clusters of cases, or outbreaks, are occasionally seen in day care centers.

What preventive measures and treatments are available?

To prevent spread, avoid physical contact with affected individuals and their belongings, especially clothing and bedding. In severe cases, clothing and bed linen worn or used by an infested individual in the 48 hours before treatment may be laundered and dried at the highest temperature or stored in a container such as a plastic bag for 5-7 days to kill mites and their eggs. Use of environmental pesticides should be avoided.

Treatments include medicated lotions applied to the skin, or in severe cases, medication taken by mouth which requires a prescription from a health care provider. Itching may persist for one to two weeks after treatment, but this should not be regarded as treatment failure or re-infestation. If itching persists for more than 2-4 weeks after treatment or new pimplelike rash and/or borrows appears retreatment is indicated. Avoid over treatment with anti-scabies medication



GET THE FACTS

Scabies

What should schools do?

- Notify affected families of contacts,
- Educate families and staff about life cycle of scabies, proper treatment, and the need for early diagnosis and treatment of infested individuals and contacts,
- Exclude the appropriate individual.

What are recommendations for exclusion?

Individuals with scabies should be excluded from school or daycare until the day after treatment is initiated.

For more information, visit [Scabies Frequently Asked Questions | CDC](#) or [Scabies - Symptoms and Causes | Mayo Clinic](#)

