



What is Scabies?

Scabies is a skin infection caused by a small parasite called a mite. Scabies can be irritating, However, does not cause disease.

What are the symptoms?

Scabies can appear as small bumps or tiny thread-like lines found mainly in the webs of fingers, wrists, elbows, breasts, genitals, abdomen, back and buttocks. Scabies can also appear on the head, face, neck and body of infants. The rash is accompanied by intense itchiness, which is often worse at night. Secondary infection may occur due to scratching the infected area.

How is it spread?

Scabies is transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person and during sexual contact. Scabies may also be spread via clothing or bedding that was used immediately beforehand by an infected person. Poor personal hygiene is not a risk factor for scabies.

How is it treated?

Once scabies has been diagnosed by a physician, there are a variety of treatment lotions or creams that can be obtained from the pharmacy. These treatment lotions or creams may be prescribed by a health care provider or bought over-the-counter. Be sure to read the label and follow the directions carefully.

What can I do to prevent it?

- You can prevent getting scabies by not sharing towels, bedding, or clothing.
- Any towels, bedding and clothing that have been used by the infected person 48 hours prior should be washed on the hot cycle of the washer and dryer.
- Mattresses and furniture do not need to be disinfected.
- The person infected with scabies should avoid close contact with others by staying home from daycare/school/work for at least 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Family members and close contacts of an infected person should be treated as instructed by their physician.

Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 x349. Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | www.hpepublichealth.ca

References

- Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, Scabies
- Lambton Health Unit, Scabies, October 2011
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Scabies, May, 2012
- Sudbury & District Health Unit, Scabies, July 2010

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