



Get the Facts: What is Scabies?

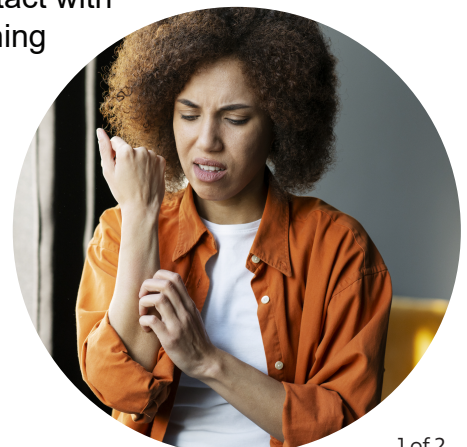
Scabies is a skin condition caused by tiny bugs called mites. These mites dig under the skin and cause itching and irritation.

Symptoms of Scabies:

- The most common symptom is an intense itchy rash which occurs especially at night. The rash can be anywhere on the body, but most commonly occurs on the hands, elbows, buttocks, knees, wrists, chest, skin folds, genital area and waistline.
- The skin rash often looks like raised lines made up of tiny red bumps.
- Symptoms usually begin 2-6 weeks after the first exposure but can start as soon as 1-4 days if you have had scabies before.
- Some people can develop sores on the body from itching, which can lead to infection.

How Does Scabies Spread?

- Scabies spreads quickly when there is frequent or prolonged skin-to-skin contact between people or skin contact with a contaminated environment.
- A quick handshake or hug will usually not spread scabies. Scabies can live on the human body for up to 1 month.
- Clothes, towels, bed sheets, etc. could be examples of an environment that can be contaminated if the items were recently in contact with a person who has scabies. Mites can live on clothing and other objects for up to 4 days.
- Scabies can spread through people in close physical contact like in a, childcare group, school class or long-term care home.
- Scabies can be spread to other people even before symptoms appear.
- Pets do not spread scabies

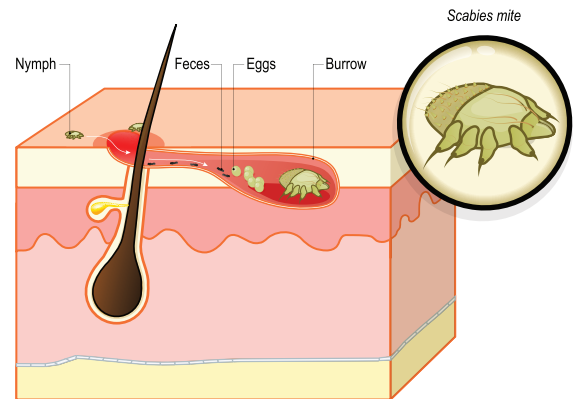




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How is Scabies Diagnosed?

Scabies can be diagnosed by using a microscope to look for the mite in skin scrapings. Sometimes a healthcare provider who is familiar with scabies will diagnose scabies after looking at the rash and asking about symptoms.



Treatment of Scabies:

- Scabies requires treatment prescribed by a physician and will not go away on its own. Fortunately, there are medications that can kill scabies mites e.g. topical creams or lotions and oral medication in some cases.
- Always follow the instructions provided by the healthcare provider and/or pharmacist.
- Itching may continue up to 4 weeks after treatment; this does not mean that the treatment did not work.
- Please see your healthcare provider for re-assessment if the itching continues after 4 weeks, or new itchy rashes are appearing.
- The mites can spread to others, a healthcare provider may recommend treatment for all family members and other close contacts who have prolonged skin to skin contact with the infected person, even if there are no signs of infestation. It is important that this treatment be initiated at the same time for all close contacts.

Talk to a healthcare provider if you:

- See or feel signs and symptoms of scabies.
- Have had close contact to someone who has scabies.

How to Prevent Scabies:

- Avoid direct skin-to-skin contact and sharing clothing, bedding or towels with someone who has scabies.

