

Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

Scabies

Health Information Fact Sheet #11

Scabies is an infection in the skin caused by mites (parasites) which affects humans. The mites burrow under the skin and create intense itching and a rash-like appearance of the skin. Some individuals are at risk for crusted scabies, a severe form of scabies creating thick crusts of skin containing very large numbers of mites and eggs.

Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.



Some Facts about Scabies:

- Itching and skin rash may not appear until four (4) to six (6) weeks after infection.
- Prolonged skin-to-skin contact passes the infection from person to person.
- Scabies mites can survive on linens and other surfaces for up to three (3) days.
- Crusted Scabies is a severe, highly contagious form of scabies.

Risk Factors (Causes):

The following increase chances of getting Scabies:

- Direct skin-to-skin contact with an individual who has scabies.
- Living conditions where close quarters are common, such as nursing homes, group homes, extended care facilities, and daycare centers.
- Sharing the clothing, towels, or bedding of an infected individual.
- Individuals with a weak immune system (aging, disability, illness) are at risk for severe crusted scabies.

What to Watch For:

The following physical signs may be helpful in recognizing an individual with scabies:

- Itching (especially at night)
- Skin Rash (“pimple-like” or tiny blisters)
- Crusted Patches of Skin (for individuals with crusted scabies)
- Common Locations for rash may include:
 - Wrist
 - Between the fingers or toes
 - Elbow
 - Shoulder blades
 - Armpits
 - Palms of hands
 - Buttocks
 - Under breasts
 - Groin area
 - Possibly the entire body

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What to Do:

Immediately contact the doctor for noted signs and symptoms of scabies.

- If confirmed as scabies, the doctor will order medication to get rid of the scabies.
- Additionally, the doctor may treat other household members and staff in close contact with the individual confirmed to have scabies.
- *Practice good hand hygiene:* Wash hands between individuals with whom you are working and use alcohol-based hand rubs and sanitizers.
- Scabies is generally passed through direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact or through use of another individual's personal items.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, clothing, or bedding.
- *Cleaning:*
 - Wash clothing, bedding, and towels in the washer with detergent and dry in the dryer.
 - Fabric should be washed and dried on the warmest setting stated on the cleaning instructions label.
- Scabies mites can live up to three (3) days when not in contact with an individual's body.
- Clean rooms and furniture of the infected individual(s) and other members of the household.

Emergency

Contact the doctor if symptoms, such as rash and itching, do not get better within the time specified by the doctor, or if other concerns arise.

