

SCABIES FACT SHEET

Persons suspected of having scabies should be seen by a physician so that appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up can be obtained.

Definition and Cause

Scabies is a communicable skin disease that is caused by a tiny mite, called *sarcoptes scabiei*.

Signs and Symptoms

- Severe itchy red bumps or blisters on skin;
- Location of rash is: skin folds between fingers and toes, wrists, elbows, armpits, waist line, thighs, penis, abdomen, lower buttocks.
- Children younger than age 2: rash may include head, neck, palms, soles of feet, diffusely over body.
- After contacting someone with scabies, it can take 4-6 weeks before symptoms appear for someone who has never had scabies previously. Otherwise, it can take only 1-4 days to develop the signs and symptoms.

How Scabies is Spread

- Direct contact with someone who has scabies
- Sharing of towels, bedding, and clothing. These items can spread infection to someone up to 3 days after being used by a person with a scabies infection.
- Scabies is considered contagious until it is treated.
- Scabies may be contagious before symptoms appear.

Treatment of Scabies

- No over-the-counter treatment works. Parents must seek a physician's prescription. A lotion that treats scabies is also referred to as a "scabicide". Several products are available.
- Apply prescribed lotion to all areas of the body from the neck down to the feet and toes.
- When treating children under age 2 years, also apply lotion to head and neck regions, because scabies can affect that part of their body at that age.
- Parents must be certain that applied lotion is left on the body for the duration of time recommended on the bottle or by the doctor. That may be several hours or overnight.
- Physicians often must treat family members, even those without symptoms.

Home Management

- Contact your child's physician for diagnosis and treatment.
- To avoid dangerous side effect, follow your doctor's treatment as recommended.
- Towels, bedding, and clothing must either be laundered in very hot water, or stored in a plastic bag for 72 hours, before being used by anybody.
- Children with scabies may attend school once it is reported that treatment has been completed. It is normal for itching to persist after a successful treatment.
- Check your child's skin in one week after treatment. If symptoms are not improving, contact your child's physician.