

Scabies

Scabies is an infestation of the skin by the human itch mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*). The microscopic mite burrows into the upper layer of the skin where it lives and lays its eggs.

What are the symptoms of scabies?

- Intense itching, especially at night, AND small raised bumps on skin – usually found on finger/toe webs, wrists, elbows, armpits, nipples, buttocks, and penis. The head, face, neck, palms and soles are not involved in adults but may be in infants and young children.
- Tiny “burrows” on the skin where the female mite is tunneling under the skin. Burrows look like tiny grayish or white crooked lines on the skin surface.
- Scabies symptoms may take up to 4-6 weeks after exposure to begin. Symptoms can appear much sooner in someone who has had scabies before.

How is scabies spread?

Scabies is spread by direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies (for example, sexual partners and family members). A quick handshake or hug will not spread scabies. It is possible but not common for scabies to spread through sharing clothing or towels with a person infected with scabies. The scabies mite does not hop or fly and cannot live off the host body for more than 72 hours.

How is scabies diagnosed?

At City Clinic we diagnose scabies by typical appearance and location of the rash/bumps. In some settings the diagnosis may be made by a skin scraping and microscope exam for mites, eggs or mite feces.

How do you cure scabies?

- To get rid of scabies you need to use a prescription cream called Elimite. (Apply the lotion to the entire body, starting at the neck and going to the toes. Leave on for 8 hours then wash off.). Put on clean clothes after treatment. *There are no over the counter products that are effective against scabies.*
- **Wash all clothing and bedding in hot water and dry on hot cycle. Things that cannot be washed can be dry-cleaned or placed in a sealed bag for at least 3 days.**
- **Make sure that your sexual partners and household members get treated at the same time (especially those who share your bed).**

Why am I still itching after treatment?

It is common to continue itching for up to two weeks after treatment due to parts of the scabies mite still being under your skin. This does not mean treatment failed. Cortisone cream/ointment and oral antihistamine tabs can be used to relieve itching.

Scabies is very often misdiagnosed. You may still be itching due to another cause (you may not have had scabies at all).

Re-infection - Repeat treatment might be necessary if you are still itching after 4 weeks, and/or new burrows or bumps occur in the typical locations.

For more information:

Please talk with your City Clinic clinician or your own health care provider. The following websites also offer helpful information:

General STD

www.ashasexualhealth.org (also in Espanol)

www.cdc.gov/std/

www.sfcityclinic.org

www.sfsi.org/

Contraception and STD/sex info

www.bedsider.org

Teens

www.iwannaknow.org

www.amplifyyourvoice.org (also in Espanol)

www.kidshealth.org/teen (also in Espanol)

www.scarleteen.com

For a STD check-up or treatment,
see your doctor, local clinic, or come to:



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