

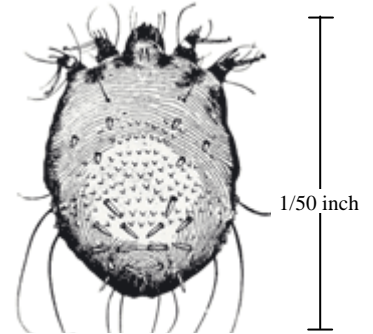
Scabies

The Scabies problem

Scabies is an infestation of the skin with the microscopic mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*. Scabies spreads rapidly under crowded conditions where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact between people, such as in hospitals, institutions, child care facilities, and nursing homes.

Scabies facts

Scabies is a skin condition caused by a tiny mite (0.2 - 0.4 mm ~ 1/100 - 1/50") that burrows into the skin causing an allergic reaction and intense itching. The mite makes small, open sores and linear burrows just under the skin surface. The mites and eggs are within the burrows.



Mode of Scabies Transmission

Direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person already infested with scabies is how a person gets scabies. Contact must be prolonged (a quick handshake or hug will usually not spread infestation). Infestation is easily spread to sexual partners and household members. Infestation may also occur by sharing clothing, towels, and bedding.

Signs of Scabies

Intense itching is the most common symptom of scabies. Pimple-like irritations, burrows or rash of the skin, especially the webbing between the fingers; the skin folds on the wrist, elbow, or knee are also signs of scabies infestation. For a person who has never been infested with scabies, symptoms may take 4-6 weeks to begin. For a person who has had scabies, symptoms appear within several days. There is no immunity to scabies. A person can get scabies multiple times.

Diagnosis of Scabies infestation

Diagnosis is most commonly made by looking at the burrows or rash. A skin scraping may be taken to look for mites, eggs, or mite fecal matter to confirm the diagnosis. If a skin scraping or biopsy is taken and returns negative, it is possible that you may still be infested. Typically, there are fewer than 10 mites on the entire body of an infested person; this makes it easy for an infestation to be missed.

Effective Scabies treatment for people

- Skin lotions or creams containing lindane, permethrin, pyrethrin or crotamiton are recommended for treatment. Always follow the directions provided by your physician or the directions on the package insert.
- It usually takes about 1 to 2 days for the itching to go away; however, sometimes the itching can last for a few weeks. If the treatment is effective there should be no new rashes or burrows after 24 to 48 hours.
- All clothes, bedding, and towels used by the infested person 2 days before treatment should be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer.
- Your health care provider may prescribe additional medication to relieve itching if it is severe.

(continued on back)



**Tri-County Health
Department**

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Scabies (continued)

Did my pet spread Scabies to me?

No. Pets become infested with a different kind of scabies mite. If your pet is infested with scabies, (also called mange) and they have close contact with you, the mite can get under your skin and cause itching and skin irritation. However, the mite dies in a couple of days and does not reproduce. The mites may cause you to itch for several days, but you do not need to be treated with special medication to kill the mites. Until your pet is successfully treated, mites can continue to burrow into your skin and cause you to have symptoms.