



Communicable Diseases

Scabies

What is Scabies?

Scabies is a skin disease caused by a tiny insect called an “itch mite” which burrows itself under the skin to lay its eggs. Scabies causes severe itching and is often called the “itch”.

How does a person get (disease name)?

You can get Scabies by being in direct physical contact with a person who has Scabies. Scabies can be spread by wearing that person’s clothing or by sleeping in that person’s bed. It can also be passed on through sexual contact with a person who has scabies.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Scabies appear as small, red slightly raised itchy spots or streaks commonly found between fingers, on wrists or belt lines and in the folds of the skin, but may appear anywhere on the body. The spots may be blisters and are more itchy at night.

How is Scabies treated?

- See a Doctor or nurse to get a cream. If a family member is diagnosed with scabies, the whole house may need to be treated.
- Follow the medication directions **carefully**.
- If you have scabs or crusts from scratching, have a bath or shower first, this will soften them and let the medicine get where it needs to go. *Wait 15 minutes until the skin is cool and dry before applying the lotion or cream.*

- Cover your entire body with the cream. Mites like to live in the skin around the waist and genital area, so pay special attention to these areas when applying the cream.
- Dress in clean clothes.
- Leave the lotion or cream on for 8 to 12 hours (overnight is a good time).
- Then take a bath or shower with warm water (not hot!) and wash well. Put on clean clothes.
- Follow up with the doctor or nurse in about seven days to see if you need another treatment.

Care of Clothing and Linens:

The mite that causes Scabies can live in clothing and bed linens for up to a week. You can treat linen/clothes in one of these ways:

- a) Using hot water, wash all clothing, bed linens, towels and washcloths that have been used or worn within one week before the treatment.
- b) Clothes, blankets, etc. can be put in the dryer at the highest heat for 15 minutes.
- c) Put all clothes and linen used in a bag and leave for one week.

Why is it important to treat Scabies?

- To stop the itching because scratching can lead to other infections.
- So you don’t pass Scabies on to others.

Contact your local Health Centre if you require further information.



Updated April 2015

Adapted from Saskatchewan Health Fact Sheet – Scabies-
February 2013