

# Health Care Education Scabies



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*And when I am sick, then He heals me. - - - Al Quran – Ash-Shuraa, Verse 26:80*

## Scabies

### **What is scabies?**

Scabies is a very itchy skin condition caused by the Scabies mite. Scabies mites are attracted to the warmth and smell of humans.



The Scabies mites are not visible with the naked eye.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Itching and irritation of skin that gets worse until the mites are killed:

- Pimple-like irritations
- burrows or rash of the skin
- Intense itching, especially at night and over most of the body
- Sores on the body caused by scratching; these sores can become infected

Symptoms are most likely to develop between the fingers and on the palm side of the wrists, on the outside surfaces of the elbows and in the armpits, around the waistline and navel, on the buttocks, around the nipples, bra line, and the sides of the breasts (in women), and on the genitals (in men).

In babies and small children, itching and skin irritation may also occur:

- Around or on the scalp, neck, and face.
- On the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. Often the first symptom noticed in babies is a series of tiny blister like sores (vesicles) in these areas.



### **How does Scabies spread?**

By direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person already infested with 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. The scabies mite that infests humans does not live on dogs or other pets. Similarly, animal-transmitted scabies mites do not survive or reproduce on humans. However, they can live long enough on humans to cause itchy hives or raised bumps that may last for few days.

### **How can Scabies be prevented?**

Avoid close skin-to-skin contact with someone who has scabies, as well as with his or her personal items. Those infected with scabies

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should use care to avoid spreading the mites to others.

### *Who is most likely to get scabies?*

The following groups of people are at higher risk of exposure to scabies mites:

- Sexually active young adults. Close skin-to-skin contact (not specifically sexual intercourse) makes transmission of the scabies mites more likely.
- People who live or work in institutions such as nursing homes, homes for the developmentally disabled, and prisons.
- People who live in crowded conditions.
- Children from developing countries.

People who have weakened immune systems, such as HIV, and those who are unable to communicate about their physical symptoms are at risk for developing severe, difficult-to-treat cases of scabies, particularly crusted (Norwegian) Scabies. This type of Scabies is extremely contagious because of the large number of mites found in and on the skin. Those who have certain nutritional disorders, infectious diseases, leukemia, or weakened immune systems (such as people who have AIDS) may be susceptible to this type of Scabies.

| Characteristics of this form of scabies include:

- scaly, crusted sores on the hands, feet, scalp, face, torso, and pressure-bearing areas such

as the elbows; facial skin may flake off, and significant hair loss can result

- severe itching, though a few people experience mild itching or none at all
- slow response to treatment compared with other forms of scabies; when multiple treatments are ineffective, oral treatment with the medication ivermectin may be used

### *Who should get tested for Scabies?*

If you can answer “YES” to any of these questions, please see your doctor immediately because you might be at risk for Scabies.

#### **Please answer these questions honestly**

Do you have Severe itching, especially at night? Yes No

Currently, have you:

- Had a rash, sometimes with skin sores? Yes No

- Been around other family members or people you are physically close with who are also itching or who have recently been diagnosed with scabies? Yes No

### *How to kill Scabies?*

Clothing, sheets, and towels should be washed in hot water. Clothing should be ironed under a warm iron.

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Sources: Department of Health and Human Services, January 2006, Center for Disease Control, and information available freely on the Internet.

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