

SCABIES

Incubation, Signs and Symptoms

Incubation Period: 2-6 weeks before itching begins in a person with no previous exposure. Persons with prior exposure develop symptoms within 1-4 days.

Signs and Symptoms: Scabies is a skin infestation caused by microscopic parasites called mites. The mites burrow under the skin creating small raised areas of skin containing fluid or tiny paths under the skin. These burrows resemble wavy lines and appear frequently on finger webs or on the inside of the wrists and elbows. A rash may occur anywhere on the body, regardless of the area of infestation. Itching is intense, especially at night.

Methods of Transmission

Spread by direct skin-to-skin contact with an infested person. Less commonly, transmission occurs through contact with contaminated clothing, bedding, or other articles.

Minimum Control Measures

Communicable Period: From the time of infestation until after mites and eggs are destroyed which ordinarily occurs after 1 or occasionally 2 courses of treatment 1 week apart. Generally, a person is treated on the first day. On the second day a bath or shower is taken and all linens, underclothes and bedding are changed. Carpets and furniture should be vacuumed. It should be noted that sometimes itching will persist for 1-2 weeks after treatment. This should not be taken as a sign that treatment failed. Over-treating should be avoided because the medication can be toxic. Follow the directions on the package exactly.

Control: **Diagnosis of scabies should be confirmed by a physician. If a single case has been confirmed, EXCLUDE the child from attendance until the day after treatment is started.** Individuals who have had direct contact with the infested child, including family members, should be evaluated and, if necessary, treated.

A child with rash, fever, and extreme itching, should be EXCLUDED until cleared by the health care provider.

Other Information

A single infestation in a family is uncommon. Bedding and clothing worn next to the skin during 72 hours prior to treatment should be laundered on the hot cycle. Store difficult to wash items in closed plastic bags for 5 days. Disinfection of the general environment is not necessary. Consult the local health department for help in controlling outbreaks of this disease. Also report any pattern of illness which is unusual or an increased number or illnesses/cases.