



What is scabies?

In this document the term patient is inclusive of patient, resident and client.

Scabies is a parasitic infestation of the skin caused by *Sarcoptes scabiei*, a type of mite that burrows into the skin to lay eggs. Scabies appear as small, red, slightly raised spots or streaks commonly found between fingers, on wrists, around the waistline, and in the folds of the skin, but may appear anywhere on the body. Scabies can cause itching that is usually worse at night; older adults tend to have more severe itching and rash with tiny blisters or sores.

How do you get scabies?

Scabies can be spread from one person to another through prolonged, close, unprotected personal skin to skin contact with an infected person or sharing their personal items such as bed linen and towels. Scabies mites do not 'jump' from person to person. It can take 2 to 6 weeks for symptoms to appear after exposure. If you have had scabies in the past, symptoms can occur 1 to 4 days after a second exposure.

Can scabies be treated?

- If your doctor or nurse practitioner diagnoses you with scabies, they prescribe a scabicide lotion.

What happens in a healthcare setting if I have scabies?

- A sign is placed on the door with instructions for all visitors and staff to wear personal protective equipment such as a gown and gloves when entering your room.
- Healthcare staff follow specific application instructions for the scabicide lotion.
- You need to remain in your room until 24 hours after the scabicide treatment is removed.
- Staff examine your skin 7 to 10 days after treatment to ensure it was successful. Itching may persist for 1 to 4 weeks after treatment, but it is not an indication that the treatment did not work.

Is it safe for people to visit me if I have scabies?

- Yes, your family and friends are welcome to visit you. We ask that your visitors follow the instructions on the sign posted on your door and clean their hands before and after visiting you.

What should I do to prevent scabies from spreading?

- Your doctor may advise that your household contacts undergo treatment.
- Discard any jars of creams, lotions, or ointments that were used prior to your treatment.
- Machine-wash and dry on the hot-setting all clothing, bed linens, towels, stuffed animals, etc., used prior to treatment. Items that cannot be laundered should be sealed in a plastic bag for at least 72 hours.
- Vacuum carpets and upholstered surfaces in areas where you spent time, as mites can survive 2 to 3 days off the body.
- Do not share personal items like towels, clothing, bar soap, or razors.
- Clean your hands regularly. This is the best way to stop germs from spreading.

