

# SCABIES

## Personal Health Fact Sheet

### ***What is Scabies?***

*Scabies is a skin disease caused by an almost invisible organism, the “itch mite.” These mites live in burrows dug into the top layers of the skin. The burrows contain the mites and their eggs.*

### **How is it spread?**

Scabies is spread by direct skin to skin contact of infested individuals. It can also be acquired during sexual contact, or from contaminated undergarments and bedclothes.

### **How is it treated?**

- Scabies is diagnosed by a physician, who can prescribe a lotion or cream containing a scabicide (prescription medication). There are specific scabicides available for pregnant women and infants under one year of age.
- Use scabicide according to directions.
- Household and sexual contacts of an infested person should be treated at the same time.
- If eggs survived the first treatment, a second course of treatment may be necessary in 7-10 days

### **What else should be done?**

After treatment, infested persons should be excluded from school or work for 24 hours. Bedding and clothing worn by the infested person should be washed in hot, soapy water and dried in a hot dryer. Freshly laundered clothing should be worn after each bath/shower and treatment.

### **How can we prevent Scabies?**

- Treatments should not be used for prevention.
- Avoid skin to skin contact with others until 24 hours after initial treatment.
- Notify school staff and parents of playmates, so that others can be alert for additional cases.

### **SYMPTOMS OF SCABIES**

- Symptoms usually occur 2-6 weeks after exposure.
- A red, itchy rash occurs at sites of burrows such as spaces between fingers, backs of hands, elbows, armpits, groin, breasts, umbilicus, penis, small of back and buttocks.
- Itching may continue for 2-3 weeks, even after effective treatment.



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