

Scabies

Scabies is caused by **small 0.3 mm sized insects** that dig burrows in the skin and lay eggs. An itchy red rash can form on the skin above the eggs, with **small blisters** or **red bumps**.

The rash is very itchy and **gets worse at bedtime**. You may notice the rash between fingers, on the wrists, on the inside of the elbows, around the waist, on the buttocks or genitalia. **The face and neck are usually not affected.**

How does scabies spread?

Scabies spreads easily to other people by close body contact (for example, holding hands, hugging, sleeping together), or by sharing the same clothes or bedding.

Do I need tests?

No, tests are not needed. A doctor will diagnose scabies by examining you.

How can I treat scabies?

Scabies will not go away without treatment. The doctor will prescribe the necessary treatment, as a liquid to apply on your skin or as a couple of pills to take.

So scabies does not come back it is very important that the people living under your roof or your close partner(s) are treated as well.

The itchiness does not go away as soon as the treatment is finished and can take a few weeks to resolve completely.

Make sure to cut your nails short and avoid scratching to prevent skin infections or scarring.

How can I prevent spreading scabies?

Make sure that all clothes or beddings that touched the skin during the last week are washed in hot water > 60 °C.

An alternative to washing is to put items in a sealed plastic bag to be placed outdoors for at least four days. You can also use a spray to disinfect bedding. The pharmacist can give you the appropriate spray and instruct you as to its correct use.

Disclaimer: The information in this publication is not meant to replace the advice of a health professional. If you have any questions about your health please contact a health professional.

Resources: UpToDate.com, American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)

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