

## Scabies

Scabies is caused by mites that burrow into the top layer of the skin and lay eggs.

### How do I get scabies?

You can get scabies by:

- having skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies
- sharing clothes, towels, bedding, or sleeping bags with a person who has scabies

### How do I know I have scabies?

Scabies can cause an itchy rash that is most often on the wrists, in the creases of the elbows and/or knees, and between the fingers.

The rash might be tiny red bumps, small blisters, white lines, or look like scratch marks.

The itching often gets worse when the body is warm (e.g., after a warm bath, at night when you're covered with blankets).

It can take weeks before you have symptoms. But, scabies can spread from person to person before the rash and itching starts.

### How is scabies treated?

Scabies doesn't go away without treatment. Follow these steps and do **all** steps on the **same day**.

- 1) Treat scabies with a special cream or lotion that kills mites. You can buy it at a drugstore without a prescription. Follow the package directions or ask a pharmacist. Put the lotion on the whole body from the neck down. Put clean clothes on after treatment. Talk to your pharmacist, doctor, or nurse if you have questions or if you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or treating a child under 2.
- 2) You must treat all clothes, towels, and bedding used during treatment **and** any unwashed items used 2 to 3 days before treatment. To do this, wash all items in hot water (50 °C) and put them in a dryer for at least 20 minutes on the hottest setting. If any items can't be washed, have them dry-cleaned or loosely pack them in a sealed plastic bag. Put the bag in the freezer for 2 to 7 days.

3) Vacuum mattresses, pillows, rugs, beds, and furniture.

The itching and rash might not go away for days or weeks. If the itching doesn't get better (or it gets worse and it's been at least 2 weeks after treatment), talk to your nurse or doctor. You may need to repeat the treatment.

### **How can I prevent scabies?**

If someone has scabies, everyone who lives with that person must be treated at the same time (even if there is no rash or itching). Anyone who has had skin-to-skin contact or shares clothes, towels, or bedding with the person who has scabies must be treated.

Children who have scabies must stay home from school and daycare until they've been treated.

Adults who have scabies can **not** work in hospitals, nursing homes, extended care facilities, personal care or childcare places until they've been treated.

### **For More Information**

- STI/HIV Information Line: 1-800-772-2437
- [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [www.sexgerms.com](http://www.sexgerms.com)



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