

SCABIES

Scabies is a condition of the skin caused by the itch mite. The female mite burrows into the top skin layer. The mite then lays eggs that hatch within a day or so. The new mites burrow and spread. The itching which occurs is caused by the body developing an allergy to the mite. Areas where mites can be found are the spaces between the fingers, inner wrists, the armpits, the abdomen and upper legs. They do not spread as easily from person to person as head lice.

Who is affected?

Scabies is often found in families or other groups of people living close together. It is caused by skin-to-skin contact.

What are the symptoms?

Finding the mite is not easy. The burrows from the mite leave fine wavy dark lines under the skin. At the end of the burrows small blisters may appear. Scratching from the severe itching may cause sores on the skin and further infection.

How is it treated?

Persons who think they may have scabies should contact their doctor or health department to get the right kind of treatment.

The person will receive special medicine to be applied to the skin. A warm, soapy shower or bath should be taken before the medicine is applied. The medicine must be left on for 24 hours. Every household member should be treated the same way. This process may need to be repeated a week later. If further treatment is needed, the doctor or health department should be contacted.

How is it prevented?

To prevent further spreading, cases should be treated early.