

Scabies

Scabies is an itchy skin condition that is easily spread from person to person.



Scabies rash on the bottom of a baby's foot

(Image appears with permission from VisualDx)

What is scabies?

Scabies is an itchy skin condition. It is caused by very tiny bugs (mites) that burrow in the skin and lay eggs. The mites are too small to see with your eyes.

What areas of the body are usually affected?

- Fingers and the webbed spaces between fingers
 - Armpits
 - Skin folds around wrists, elbow creases and behind the knees
 - Genital area and the buttocks
 - Toes and the webbed spaces between toes
 - Sides and bottoms of the feet
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What are the symptoms?

- Severe itching
 - Little, usually red bumps, blisters or a pimple-like rash
 - Sores caused by scratching
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How is it spread?

Scabies spreads from close contact between people. You can get it from sharing clothes, towels, bedding and close skin-to-skin contact.

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To Learn More

- Dermatology
206-987-2158
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org/patient-education

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



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How is it treated?

Scabies is usually treated with medicine that you put on the skin (topical), such as permethrin 5% cream.

How do I apply the medicine?

1. Rub a thin layer of the medicine on your child's skin from the neck down when your child's skin is completely dry. Avoid giving your child a bath or a shower before you put it on because it can cause too much medicine to be absorbed into the skin.
 2. Include all areas of the skin from the neck down, even areas that do not seem to be affected. Make sure to put the medicine on the skin between the fingers, toes and under the fingernails. If there is a rash on your child's face, carefully apply the cream in that area, avoiding their eyes and mouth.
 3. Once you have covered all of your child's skin from the neck down, leave the cream on overnight. If your child is an infant or toddler, put on gloves or socks to prevent them from rubbing medicine into their eyes. In the morning, wash off the medicine with soap and water in the bath or shower.
 4. Wait 7 days, then apply the medicine again the same way. Scabies usually goes away after 2 treatments.
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Are there other medicines for scabies?

We may treat older children and adults with a medicine taken by mouth, called ivermectin. Your healthcare provider will talk about this treatment option with you if needed.

How long will my child have a rash?

Your child's rash should go away after treatment, but they can be itchy for up to 2 months or sometimes longer. There are different kinds of anti-itching medicines taken by mouth or applied onto the skin that may be recommended to relieve your child's itching until it goes away completely. Let your healthcare provider know if your child continues to develop new rash.

Will scabies come back?

Scabies will come back if your home and family members are not treated to make sure the scabies go away fully. You should start treatment for your home as soon as you begin treatment with scabies medicine.

How do I get rid of scabies in my home?

All clothing, towels, sheets and blankets that have been in contact with any family member in the past 3 days should be machine washed in hot water and dried on high heat for at least 20 minutes to destroy the mites. Do the same for car seat covers, highchair covers and strollers.

Any bedding, pillows, stuffed animals or toys that cannot be washed should be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for 3 days. This should be repeated with the second treatment.

What about my family? Even if your family members do not show symptoms, all family members should be treated with scabies medicine. Scabies is easily spread by close contact from one person to another. Usually more than 1 person in a family has it, even if they have not yet developed a rash.

When can my child return to school? Your child can return to school after 1 treatment with the scabies medicine.