

SCABIES

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SCABIES

Scabies is a skin condition characterized by intense itching particularly at night. It is caused by a microscopic insect “the scabies mite” which burrows and lives under the skin. This process leads to severe itching.

The scabies mite is acquired by intimate contact, touching an infected individual, or using their personal clothing or bedding.

The incubation period is 2-6 weeks for those persons who have **never** had scabies before. For those persons who have had scabies before, the incubation period is 1-4 days before onset of itching.

Scabies are found on the warmer areas of the body. Infestation may start between the fingers, wrists, elbows, belt line or in the groin area. As the person begins to have intense itching, he/she scratches; the mites get under the fingernails and are spread to other parts of the body.

TREATMENT

Medication for the treatment of scabies is by prescription only. This medication can be paid for with Medi-Cal.

5% permethrin cream (Elimite)

Use as directed.

Itching following treatment may continue for a few days. This is common and should not be considered a treatment failure.

DO NOT OVER TREAT YOURSELF.

After Treatment:

1. Put on clean clothing
2. All bedding and washable items used in the last 2 days should be machine washed in “hot water” cycle and dried on the “hot” cycle. If you are not able to wash bedding and clothing, seal them in a plastic bag and leave it sealed for 2 days after which time all scabie mites will be dead. You do not have to boil clothing.
3. Dry clean non-washable items or seal them in a plastic bag as above (#2).

FACTS:

- ❖ Sexual contacts and household members should be treated (some people are infested but have no symptoms; they may unintentionally infect others). **Do not use your prescription on anyone other than yourself. Some medication may not be safe for children and pregnant women.** Their physician needs to be consulted for treatment.
- ❖ The scabies mite does not live more than 2 days off the human host.
- ❖ There is no need to fumigate or disinfect the home.
- ❖ After exposure, it only takes the mite 2.5 minutes to burrow under the skin.
- ❖ Animals have a mite that is specific to them and while the mite may get on humans, the mite will not reproduce on the human host and does **not** cause scabies infestation in humans.