

Outbreaks

Occasionally outbreaks of scabies infection may occur, particularly in establishments like care homes or hospital wards, where a group of people live under one roof and have shared carers or healthcare staff.

Special advice will be given to staff within the hospital or home by the Infection Control Nurse on how to deal with the outbreak. This may involve treating a group of people (staff and residents) within the same 24 hour period. These outbreaks occur because of the long incubation period of scabies infection (the period when someone has the infection but is not displaying symptoms) and is not because of poor hygiene.

For more information about **Scabies** contact:

*The Community Infection Control Nurse at your
local Primary Care Trust (PCT)
or your local Health Protection Unit*

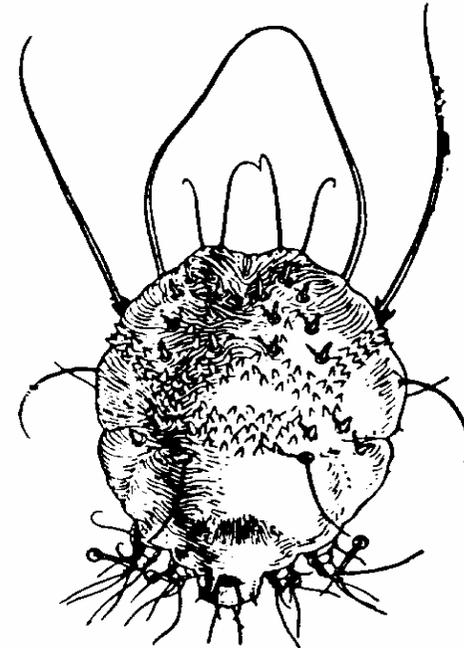
Information produced by: Health Protection Agency North West

The Health Protection Agency is a new independent organisation dedicated to protecting people's health. It brings together the expertise formerly in a number of official organisations.

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HPA North West



Scabies



Website: <http://www.hpa-nw.org.uk/>

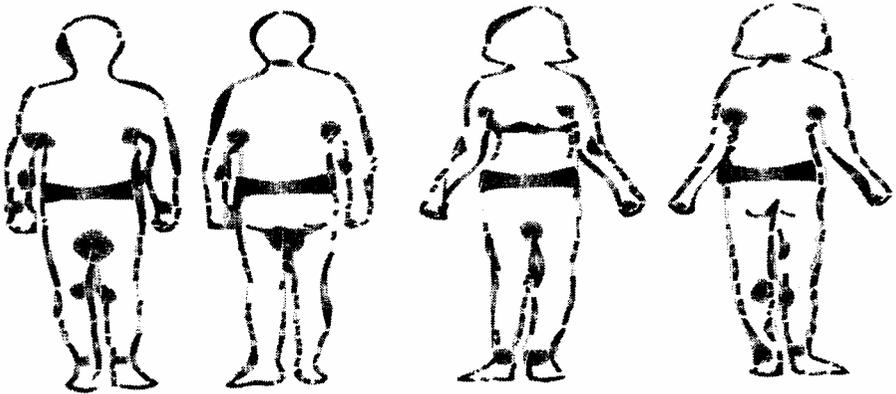
INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is Scabies?

It is a skin problem which is caused by a tiny parasite (mite) which burrows into the skin.

There may be no symptoms for the first 4-6 weeks after catching scabies, but it will develop into:-

- An allergic type rash anywhere on the body, but often on the fingers, wrists, around the waist and on the buttocks.



- Itching - particularly at night.

How is Scabies caught?

- From prolonged skin to skin contact (for several minutes or more).
- Often hand to hand contact - 80% of infections are confined to hands.
- It is **NOT** a condition caused by poor hygiene.
- It is **NOT** usually spread by clothes, bedding or towels.

Who can it affect?

ANYONE who has had close personal contact with someone infected by the scabies mite. So it is important that family members and close friends of someone infected by scabies are treated even if they do not have any symptoms or itching.

How do you treat Scabies?

- By treatment with a lotion or cream that can be obtained from your pharmacist or on prescription from your doctor or nurse.
- The lotion or cream is applied to every area of the body, including the face and head. When applying treatment to the face it is important to avoid the eyes and mouth.
- Particular attention should be paid to the toes, fingers, the private parts and areas where the rash is seen.
- It should be left on for between 8 - 24 hours depending on which preparation is used (follow the manufacturers instruction leaflet).
- You should obtain enough to enable **two applications, one week apart**.
- Itching may persist for some weeks after completing the treatment. This can be relieved by Calamine Lotion or see your doctor or pharmacist to advise on creams or anti-histamines to reduce this irritation.
- **ALL** close family and 'skin to skin' contacts must be treated at the same time to prevent re-infection. Even if symptoms are not evident.
- Do not be embarrassed to tell all close family/friends and other close contacts as Scabies is **NOT** a condition of poor hygiene.

Do you need to stay off Work or School?

- Once the correct cream/lotion has been used there is no need to stay off work or school.
- It is important to inform all close contacts as they will require treatment as well, even if they have no symptoms or itching.