

# SCABIES

Scabies is a female itch mite that burrows into the skin and lays eggs. The rash that results is really an allergic reaction to the mite, eggs and fecal deposits. The incubation period varies, but it takes two to four weeks for the rash to appear.

Scabies is usually transmitted by prolonged contact, so it is frequently observed among several family members. In fact, young adults are more likely to transmit scabies by sleeping together than by brief sexual contact.

In older children, this rash appears as many itchy fluid-filled bumps that may be under the skin next to a reddish burrow tract. In an infant, the bumps may be more scattered and isolated. Scabies can be located anywhere on the body, including the area between the fingers.

If you notice your child and other family members are constantly scratching, scabies may be suspected. If the scratch marks are not too bad, the doctor examining the rash can make diagnosis. The doctor may even gently scrape the skin from the affected area to look for the mite under the microscope.

If it turns out to be scabies, there are several anti-scabies medications that can be ordered. Most are just lotions applied over the entire body and washed off in several hours. It may sometimes have to be repeated. Sometimes, the whole family may have to be treated.

## • Directions

Apply the cream to every square inch of the body from the neck down. (Infants less than 1 year old also need it carefully applied to the scalp, forehead, temples, and neck. Avoid putting it on the lower face.) Don't forget the navel, between the toes, or other creases. Leave some cream under the fingernails. Areas that don't seem infected should still be covered with the cream.

Eight to 12 hours later give your child a bath and remove the cream. One treatment is usually effective. For severe rashes, repeat the treatment once 1 week later.

Precautions for Kwell: If Kwell is used, babies under 1 year of age should have it washed off in 4 hours. Leaving Kwell on longer than this can cause side effects. Swallowing Kwell can be quite harmful, so cover the hands with gloves or socks if your child is a thumbsucker.

## • Pregnant women

Pregnant women need special medicines for scabies. They cannot use Kwell. If you use Elimite cream, wash it off in 8 hours. If you use Eurax, leave the first coat on. Apply a second coat over it 24 hours later. Wash off all of the Eurax 24 hours after the second application. The Eurax 2-day treatment needs to be repeated once 1 week later.



• **Itching** The itching and rash may last for 2 to 3 weeks after successful treatment with Elimite or Eurax. This itch can be helped by frequent cool baths without use of soap, followed by 1% hydrocortisone cream, which you can buy without a prescription.

• **Contagiousness** Children can return to school after one treatment with the scabies medicine.

• **Family contacts** Scabies is highly contagious. The symptoms take 30 days to develop after exposure. Therefore, everyone living in the house should be treated before they develop a rash with one application of the scabies medicine. Close contacts of the infected child (such as a friend who spent the night or a baby sitter) should also be treated.

• **Cleaning the house** Machine wash all your child's sheets, pillowcases, underwear, pajamas, and recently worn clothing. Put contaminated blankets away for 3 days. Scabies cannot live outside the human body for more than 3 days.

To prevent infection, cut the child's fingernails. If itching is too severe, the doctor may give him an anti-itch or antihistamine medication. Even though treatment is under way, the itching may continue for 2-4 weeks because of the allergic rash.

There is too much controversy about whether scabies is spread from clothes or linens; But just to give you peace of mind on the day of the treatment, wash pajamas and bed linens in hot water. You don't have to disinfect the baby's room because scabies usually lives on our skin.  
RNR 6-00

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