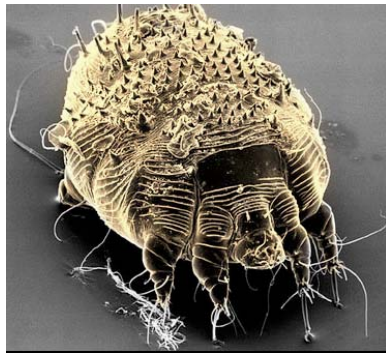
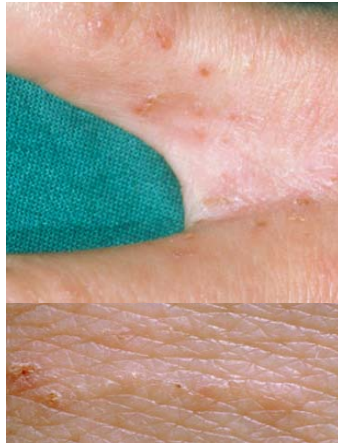


# SCABIES

Scabies is a female itch mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which 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 close contact, not just handshakes, so it is frequently observed among family members. The scabies mite can't jump or fly, and it crawls very slowly. In fact, young adults are more likely to transmit scabies by sleeping together than by brief sexual contact. Whole families, nursing homes and entire daycare classrooms are frequently treated en masse due to the contagiousness.



Young children tend to play in ways that involve skin-to-skin contact. They may also share naptime mats and blankets. If scabies is found in a child who attends daycare, it's important to notify the staff. The child's classmates and caregivers will probably need to be treated as well, even if symptoms have yet to appear. It is easier to use cream overnight than to worry for a whole month that you might have gotten them.



Although dogs and cats do get scabies (called mange) the kind they get is different from the human one, the few "bites" you get usually don't cause any reaction and won't multiply or pass on to others.

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.

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.

**Permethrin 5 percent (Elimite).** We recommend that you apply this cream — which contains chemicals that kill scabies — twice, with a week or so between each application. Permethrin is generally considered safe for children and adults of all ages, including women who are pregnant or nursing.

**Lindane (Kwell.)** This medication — also a chemical treatment — is available as a cream, lotion and shampoo. Like permethrin, it's usually applied in two treatments, spaced about a week apart. This medication isn't safe for children younger than age 2 years, women who are pregnant or nursing, or people with weakened immune systems.

**Crotamiton (Eurax).** This nonchemical medication is applied once a day for two to five days.

**Ivermectin.** Is an oral medication for stubborn cases.

**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.



**Cleaning the house.** Machine-wash all your child's sheets, pillowcases, underwear, pajamas, and recently worn clothing. Put potentially contaminated blankets away (in a big plastic bag) for a couple weeks. Scabies cannot live outside the human body for more than a week.

To prevent infection, cut the child's fingernails. If itching is too severe, you 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.

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## Caring Family, S.C.

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