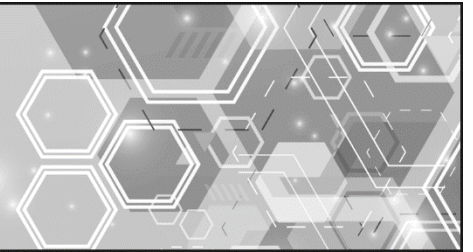




Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Scabies

What is it?

Scabies is an infection of the skin by mites, which are tiny invisible insects that burrow into the upper layer of skin to lay eggs. The body reacts to the mite by causing extremely itchy skin. Female mites lay 2-3 eggs per day that hatch in 3-4 days. On a person, mites can live for 4-6 weeks. Off a person, mites do not survive more than 2-3 days or if they are exposed to a temperature of at least 50 degrees Celsius for 10 minutes.

How is it spread?

Scabies is spread by prolonged, direct contact with the skin of a person who has scabies or from sharing clothing, bedding or towels, furniture or carpeting which may be infested.

What do I look for?

White, curvy, thread-like lines, tiny red bumps or scratch marks on the skin are usually the only sign of infestation. The most common sites of infestation are elbows, abdomen, buttocks, thighs, genital area and between fingers. The skin is extremely itchy and may be worse at night. It may take up to 2-6 weeks before the red lines appear or before the itching develops. Scabies does not usually affect the scalp or face.

Crusted (Norwegian) scabies presents as a crusty, scaly dermatitis, usually of the hands and feet. Some may have generalized rash on the skin. Itching may be minimal as compared to typical scabies, and crusted scabies can be mistaken for psoriasis. Crusted scabies is highly contagious due to the large number of mites present. Re-infection/exposure is also possible.

To find out if you have scabies, see your healthcare provider.

How is it treated?

Topical cream or oral medication are used to treat scabies. Directions should be followed carefully. Do not treat more often than recommended and consult with your healthcare provider.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



Itching may last for 1-2 weeks after treatment. This is caused by the dead mites and eggs under the skin. The itch will clear as the skin sheds naturally.

On the same day as treatment:

- Collect all clothes, towels and bed linens used in the last 72 hours by the person – wash items in hot water and dry at hottest setting – items that cannot be washed can be stored in an airtight plastic bag for 1 week to kill the mites.
- All household members and close contacts of the infected person should be treated for scabies to prevent further spread.
- Children should stay home from school or day care until the day after treatment.
- Furniture can be steam cleaned.

How can I protect myself?

- Treat all household contacts, visitors, and sexual partners.
- Keep fingernails short to help prevent infection caused by scratching.
- Do not share clothes, towels, or other personal items.
- Notify and consult with workplace health & safety team if suspected of scabies in an institutional setting.

May 16, 2023

