

Safety & Health Unit Contact Information

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Prevention

- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with the infected person
- Gloves must be worn in contact with an infected person is necessary
- Wash your hands immediately after touching and infected person
- Laundry: Underwear, clothing, and bed sheets worn or used in the 48 hours prior to treatment need to be discarded or laundered using hot cycles of the washer and dryer.



Family Services & Housing

Safety and Health Unit
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Scabies Fact Sheet

*Family Services &
Housing is committed to
preventing workplace
injuries and to
maintaining a healthy
workplace where the
responsibility for
workplace safety and well
being is shared by all
members of the
organization.*

What is Scabies?

(*Sarcoptes scabiei*)

Scabies is a contagious skin disease caused by a species of mite that is very small.

Scabies is found worldwide among people of all groups and ages. It is spread by direct contact with infected individuals and less often by sharing clothing or bedding. Sometimes whole families are affected.

The mites that cause scabies burrow into the skin and deposit their eggs, forming a characteristic burrow that looks like a pencil mark. Eggs mature in 21 days. The itchy rash is an allergic response to the mite.

Scabies is a very common problem, particularly in schools and other institutions, where people live closely together or spend a significant amount of time together.

How do you contract scabies?

Direct skin contact is usually required, or from freshly contaminated bedding or clothing. Transmission can occur as long as the infected person remains untreated and until 24 hours after treatment. The mites do not live for more than 3 – 4 days without contact with skin.

Symptoms

- Intensely itchy rash found particularly around fingers, wrists, elbows and arm pits.
- Itching, especially at night
- Thin, pencil-mark lines on the skin
- Abrasions of the skin from scratching and digging

Diagnosis

Mites can be identified from scrapings of the affected skin.

Treatment

Prescription medicated creams are commonly used to treat scabies infections. Such products are applied all over the body. It may be necessary to treat the whole family of infected individuals, even if no symptoms are present.

For difficult cases, some health care providers may also prescribe medication taken by mouth to kill the scabies mites.

Itching may persist after treatment begins, but will disappear if treatment continues exactly as your health care provider prescribes. Itching can be minimized by cool soaks and calamine lotion. Your doctor may additionally recommend an oral antihistamine.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Call your doctor if you have symptoms of scabies, or if someone with whom you have close contact has been diagnosed with scabies.