

## Patient information

### Treatment of Scabies

Infection Prevention and Control Team

#### What is scabies?

Scabies is a skin infection caused by a small mite which burrows into the skin and causes an itchy rash. The burrows are typically found in the webs of the fingers and in skin creases.

The rash may include pimples, nodules or white spots containing a clear fluid. The itching is intense and usually becomes worse at night or in a warm environment.



#### How is scabies infection picked up?

The scabies mite can be transferred by skin to skin contact with an infected person who has not been diagnosed or treated.

#### Which part of the body is affected?

The rash can affect the fingers, wrists, under-arm area, the breasts (particularly the skin of the nipples), the navel (belly button), penis, scrotum and buttocks. In infants and older people, the areas of the body affected can also include the face, scalp, palms and soles of feet. The rash usually does not affect the back.

#### Symptoms

Itching happens two to six weeks after skin contact with the mite and is worse at night. Diagnosis is made by your doctor, who will examine your skin. The presence of silvery, scaly 'burrows' in the webs of your fingers and toes sometimes with fluid filled pimples present may be a sign of scabies infection.

## **How is scabies treated?**

Scabies is treated using a cream or lotion applied directly to the skin.

All family members and close contacts must be treated within 24 to 48 hours of each other to avoid re-infection. Treatment can be provided by your local chemist.

## **Applying treatment**

Skin should be clean, dry and cool. Having a hot bath beforehand is not necessary and may lead to absorption of the treatment by the skin.

In adults, all parts of the body below the face should be treated, including under the fingernails, between the toes, the pubic area and the navel.

Help may be needed to reach between the shoulders and the upper back. In some patients, it may be recommended that the face is also treated.

Following application, the cream is left on as advised.

After washing all the lotion/cream off with cool water, a hot shower or bath can be taken in the normal way.

You should change into clean clothing and change your bedding after treatment.

The treatment should be repeated a week later.

## **Things you can do during treatment to stop scabies spreading:**

### **Do**

Wash all bedding and clothing in the house at 50°C or higher on the first day of treatment  
Put clothing that cannot be washed in a sealed bag for 3 days until the mites die

### **Don't**

Have close physical contact with other people until you have completed the full course of treatment.

Share bedding, clothing or towels with someone with scabies.

## **I'm still itching even after treatment, has it failed?**

Unfortunately, the itching many persist for a month or so after treatment, but this does not indicate treatment failure. Itching can be relieved by oily calamine lotion, Eurax cream or oral antihistamines which may be bought at your local chemist.

If after three weeks new 'burrows' appear, please tell your doctor, as you may need another course of treatment.

Marks on the skin from scabies usually go away in one to two weeks, but sometimes take a few months to go away.

## **What do I need to know if I am discharged home?**

After the first treatment, you will no longer be contagious. You may return to work or school.

Following the initial washing of clothes, bedding and towels at 50°C or higher on the first day of treatment, these items can just be washed in the usual way after that.

If you need any further information, do not hesitate to contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice on using these products.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

### **Infection Prevention and Control Team**

#### **Aintree Hospital**

**Tel: 0151 529 4930**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 4930**

#### **Royal or Broadgreen Hospitals**

**Tel: 0151 706 4416**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 4416**

#### **NHS website – Scabies**

**<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scabies/>**

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