

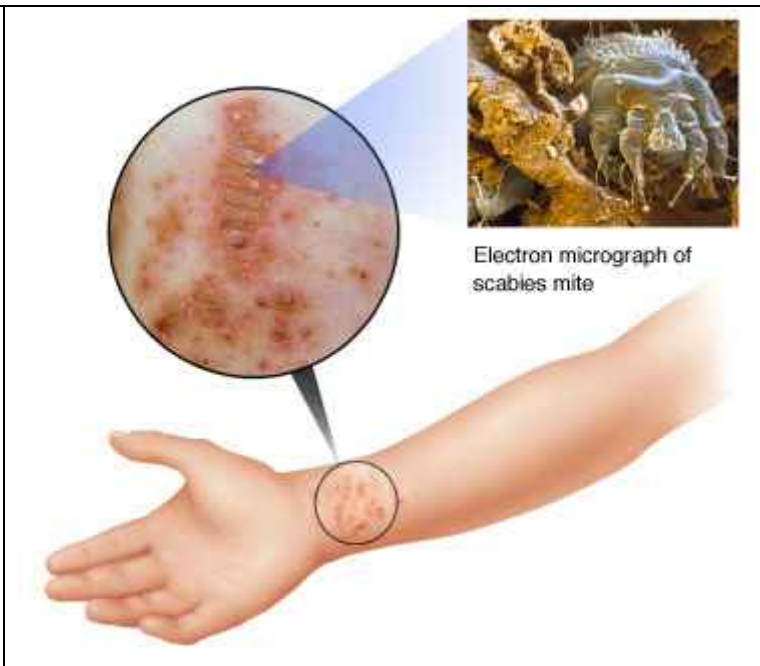
## Scabies

### What is Scabies?

Scabies is a very common infection of the skin caused by tiny parasitic mites, which burrow into the skin causing an allergic reaction, which results in itching.

### What are the signs and symptoms of Scabies?

The earliest and most common sign of Scabies is itching. The itch may involve the whole body but not usually the head. Scabies also produces a rash on the body.



### What does the Scabies rash look like?

In the early stages, the rash consists of small red papules like hives tiny bites or pimples. Common sites are in so called "warm areas" i.e. between fingers, wrist or ankle creases, buttocks or belt line, around the nipples in women and on the penis in men. It should, however, be remembered that the rash could occur anywhere on the body. If the rash is left untreated, lesions may develop which can become secondarily infected.

### How does Scabies spread?

Scabies spreads from another person through personal contact. It can affect anyone who comes into contact with it very easily; a handshake with an infected person is enough for the Scabies to spread.

### How is Scabies treated?

Scabies is in fact very easily treated. A wide range of creams and lotions are readily available at the chemist where a pharmacist will be able to advise on appropriate treatment. It is important that the cream/lotion is applied to all the skin from the jawline downwards, paying particular attention to the finger and toe webs, soles, genitalia and under the nails. It is of course important to read and follow any instructions carefully before applying any treatment.

Treatment for Scabies is usually applied at night before going to bed after a bath and left on for 8-24 hours depending on the particular treatment. The following night it is then thoroughly washed off with a bath or shower. If the hands are washed before the eight-hour period then the lotion should be reapplied to that area.

The itch associated with the Scabies usually persists for a few weeks after the treatment but the Doctor or Pharmacist could provide advise on treatment for the itch.

### Is Scabies contagious?

Scabies is extremely contagious and it is therefore very important that all family members and close contacts are treated at the same time. It is also necessary to ensure that all towels, bedding and, clothes recently worn are washed in a hot wash. Ideally coats and jackets should not be worn for 48 hours to kill any remaining mites. *Michelle Cresswell – College Nurse*

