

Outbreaks

Occasionally outbreaks of scabies infection may occur, particularly in establishments like care homes or hospital wards, where a group of people live under one roof and have shared carers or health and social care staff.

Special advice will be given to staff within the hospital or care home by the Infection Prevention & Control Nurse on how to deal with the outbreak. This may involve treating a group of people (staff and residents) within the same 24 hour period. These outbreaks occur because of the long incubation period of scabies infection (the period when someone has the infection but is not displaying symptoms) and is **not** because of poor hygiene or care.

For more information about **Scabies** contact:

The Community Infection Prevention & Control Nurse

your local Health Protection Unit

or

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics>

Information produced in collaboration with:

The Health Protection Agency North West,

North West Infection Prevention & Control Nurses

and

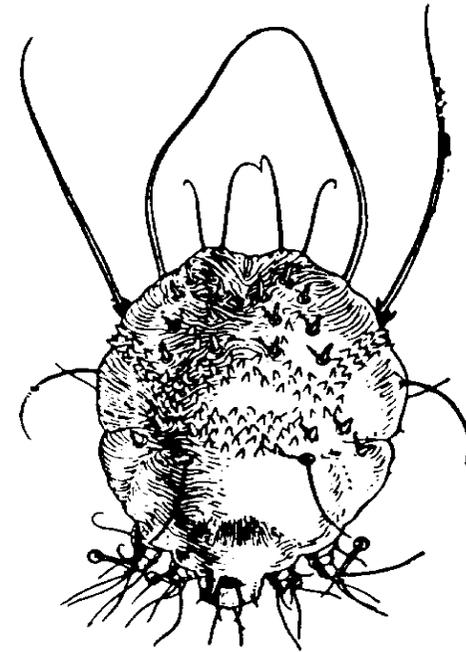
North West Environmental Health Officers.

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HPA North West



Scabies

INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is Scabies?

It is an inflammation of the skin caused by a tiny parasite (mite) which burrows into the skin.

What are the symptoms?

- There may be no rash or itching for the first 2 - 4 weeks after catching scabies for the first time, but if a person has had scabies before the rash may appear within a few days.
- An allergic type rash anywhere on the body, but often on the fingers, wrists, around the waist and on the buttocks.
- Itching - particularly at night or after hot baths.

How is Scabies caught?

- From prolonged skin to skin contact.
- It is **NOT** a condition caused by poor hygiene.
- It is **NOT** usually spread by clothes, bedding or towels.

Who can it affect?

ANYONE who has had prolonged 'skin to skin' contact with someone infected by the scabies mite.

It is important that family members, carers, close friends and sexual contacts of someone infected by scabies are treated even if they do not have any symptoms or itching.

How do you treat Scabies?

- By treatment with a lotion or cream that can be obtained from your pharmacist or on prescription from your doctor

- You should obtain enough lotion/cream to enable **two applications, one week apart.**
 - The lotion or cream is applied to **every area of the body**, including the face and head. When applying treatment to the face it is important to avoid the eyes and mouth.
 - Particular attention should be paid to the toes, fingers, the private parts and areas where the rash is seen.
 - It should be left on for between 8 - 24 hours depending on which preparation is used (follow the manufacturer's instruction leaflet).
 - Reapply the treatment to hands (or other areas of the body) if washed during this contact period.
 - Itching may persist for some weeks after completing the treatment. This can be relieved by Calamine Lotion or see your doctor or pharmacist to advise on creams or anti-histamines to reduce this irritation.
 - **ALL** close family and 'skin to skin' contacts must be treated at the same time to prevent re-infection. Even if symptoms are not evident.
 - Do not be embarrassed to tell all close family/friends and other close contacts as Scabies is **NOT** a condition of poor hygiene.
- ## Do you need to stay off work or school?
- Once the correct cream/lotion has been used there is no need to stay off work or school (i.e. you can return after the first application).
 - It is important to inform all close contacts as they will require treatment as well, even if they have no symptoms or itching.