

Scabies

Information about the contagious skin disease scabies and its treatment and prevention.

What Is Scabies?

Scabies is caused by tiny insects which burrow along in the skin, laying eggs as they go.

Above the eggs small blisters form, surrounded red patches - these are very itchy.

Why Is It So Important To Treat Scabies?

Scabies Will Not Go Away Without Treatment

- * Scratching a lot can lead to serious skin infections.
- * Untreated skin infections can lead to kidney and blood infections.
- * People who have scabies for a long time can get permanent scarring of the skin. Children scratching a lot find it hard to concentrate and learn.
- * Preschool and school teachers can ask that children with untreated scabies be kept at home.

Who Gets It?

- * Anyone! Even the cleanest people get scabies.
- * Washing in soap and water or swimming in the sea will not prevent or cure it.

How Do You Catch It?

- * Scabies spreads easily to other people in the family, to boyfriends and girlfriends and to children's friends.
- * By close body contact e.g. holding hands, hugging, sleeping together.
 - * By sharing clothes and bedding.

- * Scabies do not live in furniture or carpets.

How Do You Know You Have It?

- * Scabies causes a very itchy rash which is worse at bedtime when you are warm.
- * The rash is caused by the scabies laying eggs. Small blisters surrounded by red patches.
- * You may notice the rash first: between fingers on the wrist inside elbows around the waist on the bottom on private parts.
- * If someone in the family has scabies, others may have caught it without noticing a rash or itch.
- * If you are not sure if you have scabies, talk to your Doctor, Practice Nurse, Public Health Nurse or Plunket Nurse.

How To Treat Scabies

Everyone Living In The House Should Be Treated At The Same Time Even If They Are Not Itchy.

- * Children under 2 years and pregnant women should see their doctor first for advice about treatment as the treatment might be different.
- * You will need a special cream or lotion which you can buy from the pharmacist -

- * Ask the pharmacist how much you will need to treat all the people in your house, OR; Your Doctor will give you a prescription. Tell the

Doctor how many people you need cream/lotion for:

It is best to treat just before going to bed.

1. First have a warm bath or shower.
2. Then cover the whole body with cream/lotion, from the jaw down to the soles of the feet, in between the fingers, under the nails and on the private parts.
3. The cream/lotion must be left on overnight.
4. If you wash your hands within this time it is important to put the cream/lotion back on your hands.
5. Next morning have a bath or shower and wear clean clothes.
6. To stop scabies from spreading:

- * All clothes worn against the skin in the last week must be washed in hot water.

- * If clothes cannot be washed, dryclean them or put them in a sealed plastic bag for 4 days to kill any scabies.

- * Sheets, pillowcases, towels and face-cloths should be washed in hot water. It is not necessary to wash blankets, duvets or quilts. You can hang them out in the sun for a day.

7. Your doctor or nurse may advise you to repeat the treatment.

- * The itchiness will not go away as soon as the treatment is finished.

- * This does not mean that it has not worked. It might take up to 4 weeks for the itch to go away.

- * During this time you can use EURAX Cream (from the pharmacy) 2-3 times a day to help the itch.

- * One treatment should be enough to cure scabies. If you still have the rash and itch after 4 weeks, see your Doctor. There are other treatments for scabies that only a Doctor can prescribe, OR the rash could be something else.

Prevention

- * Children should not attend school or preschool until 24 hours after the first treatment.

- * Don't share a bed or clothes with someone who has untreated scabies.