

Frontline healthcare fact sheet

Scabies in the healthcare setting

What is scabies?

Scabies is a skin condition caused by the mite *Sarcoptes scabieivar hominis*. These tiny mites burrow under the skin and lay eggs. This can cause itching and a rash.

How does scabies spread?

Mites are spread through direct contact with an infected person or with their clothing or bedding. Scratching the skin or rash can spread the mite to different parts of the body.

What are the signs and symptoms of scabies?

- Intense itching, especially at night
- Painful bumps or sores
- Burrowing tracks or bumps that appear raised are also common and often seen in skin folds

The mites often live in the folds of skin such as between fingers and toes, or places where clothing rubs against the skin, like waist bands. Older adults may also show signs on other areas in constant contact with sheets and bedding, such as the back.

Symptoms appear 2-6 weeks after initial infestation. People with previous scabies infestation may show symptoms within 1-4 days after exposure.

Who is most at risk?

Scabies outbreaks can occur in congregate living settings like long-term care facilities, correctional facilities, or homeless shelters. Crusted scabies is a severe form of scabies that is more common in older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, and persons with severely impaired physical or mental health conditions.

How is scabies treated?

Scabies can be killed with a medicated lotion or cream. This treatment is often repeated about 1 week later.

What actions can prevent the spread of scabies in my facility?

Patients or residents with scabies should stay in their room until 24 hours after treatment. During this time, wear a gown and gloves in the room. Wash clothing, towels, and linens in hot water. Place items that can't be easily washed in a sealed bag for at least 3 days. Room should be cleaned and vacuumed, including carpets, upholstery, etc. Tell your supervisor if you develop any symptoms of scabies.

Where can I get more information?

- [CDC Scabies](#)