

Scabies Client Teaching Sheet

What are scabies?

Scabies is caused by tiny mites (bugs) that burrow under the skin.

Who gets scabies?

Many people get scabies every year. The mites are passed from an infested person to another by direct skin-to-skin contact.

Mites from a person who has scabies can also be found in clothes and passed to another person sleeping in the same bed.

Do not feel bad about yourself if you get scabies. Anyone can get scabies and scabies can be treated.

Is scabies dangerous?

Scabies is not dangerous, but it gives you a rash that itches a lot, often worse at night. Scabies will not go away by itself. You need medicine to make it go away. If you see a rash on your body or have a strange itch, see your doctor. The other people living in your house should also be checked to see if they have scabies.

Watch for these signs:

- ◆ Itching that is worse at night.
- ◆ A rash anywhere on your body from your neck down. For example:
 - Between the fingers and toes
 - On the wrist and elbow
 - In the armpit
 - In the groin area
 - Around the waist
 - Behind the knees
 - In folds or creases of the skin
- ◆ In the elderly the rash may extend to the scalp

Here is what you can do:

1. Call or visit your doctor. The doctor will prescribe a cream or lotion and tell you how to use it.

2. When you use the cream or lotion:
- ◆ Follow the directions very carefully.
 - ◆ Your skin must be cool and dry before you put on the cream or lotion. Do not take a hot bath before using it.
 - ◆ Spread the cream or lotion in a thin layer on your skin all over your body from the neck down (unless directed otherwise).
 - ◆ Do not put the cream or lotion on your face.
 - ◆ Tell the doctor if you think you are pregnant, so that he/she may prescribe the most appropriate treatment.
 - ◆ To kill any scabies that may be living on your clothes:
 - Wash your clothing, sheets, blankets and pillow cases that have been used in the previous three days in hot soapy water, if possible.
 - If items can not be washed, store them in a sealed plastic bag for three days.

What to do about the itching:

- ◆ Your skin may itch for up to two weeks after the scabies have been killed.
- ◆ Do not use the cream or lotion again unless your doctor tells you to do so.
- ◆ Try not to scratch. Scratching can break your skin so that germs can get in and cause infection. Keep your fingernails short and clean.
- ◆ Your doctor can give you medicine to help control the itching.
- ◆ Keep your skin clean by washing with soap and water.

Remember:

Scabies will not go away unless you use the proper cream or lotion.
If you have a strange rash or a strange itch, call or visit your doctor. They can help.

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