

What about bed linen and clothing?

On the day you first apply the cream or lotion, you should wash all bed linen, nightwear and towels at a temperature above 50°C (122°F).

If you are unable to wash certain items, place them in a plastic bag for at least 72 hours. After this time, the scabies mites will have died.

Useful Information

NHS 24	Freephone 111 www.nhs24.scot
NHSinform	www.nhsinform.scot

Further information and help

For further information please contact:

NHS Western Isles Public Health Team
Email: wi.healthprotection@nhs.scot
Tel. 01870 603366 / 01851 708033



Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Health Protection Team

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website feedback section at:
www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk or share your story at:
www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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Scabies



Patient information leaflet

Scabies is very common and anyone can get it. It should be treated quickly to stop it spreading.

What is scabies?

Scabies is a contagious skin condition caused by a tiny parasite (mite) that burrows under the top layer of human skin (*Sarcoptes scabiei*).

The intense itching associated with scabies is due the body's immune system reacting to the mites, their saliva, eggs and droppings by a tiny parasite or mite that burrows under the top layer of human skin.

How does it spread?

Scabies mites can't fly or jump, close physical contact is necessary for transmission. This means movement from one human body to another when two people have direct and prolonged physical skin-to-skin contact.

Transmission by casual contact (e.g. handshake or a hug) is unlikely.

Indirect transfer from clothes and undergarments does not usually occur unless an infected individual has an underlying skin condition e.g. Eczema, which leads to shedding of skin scales with attached mites.

What are the symptoms?

The incubation period is 4-6 weeks and there may be no apparent symptoms during this time. The first symptom is usually an intense itchiness. A rash may appear anywhere on the body.



Image of silver lines on the skin



Rash can start at fingers



The rash spreads and turns into tiny red dots

The itch is commonly worse at night when the body is warmer.

The area's most commonly affected are skin folds between fingers, the inner surface of wrists and elbows, under the armpits, around the nipples in females or on/around the genitals in males.

In infants, blisters or pustules (pus filled blisters) can occur on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. The rash can also be found around the waist and the buttocks; essentially it can occur almost anywhere on the body. It consists of tiny red spots and burrow marks - short wavy, silver coloured lines on the skin are characteristic of scabies.

It can take six weeks for symptoms to show up.

Should I see a GP?

Yes. Proper diagnosis of scabies requires experience as it is easily confused with other skin conditions. Sometimes a dermatologist (skin specialist) may be involved. A scraping of the skin may confirm the diagnosis.

Will I need treatment?

If scabies is diagnosed treatment is essential.

This consists of a special lotion or cream that is applied to the skin. Two treatments, a week apart, are usually advised.

It is important to follow the instructions carefully otherwise treatment may not be effective and would require to be repeated.

Although the treatment kills the scabies mite quickly, the itching can carry on for weeks.

What are the implications for families?

When scabies is confirmed it is usual for everyone in the household to be treated regardless of whether they have symptoms or not.

You or your child can go back to school or work 24 hours after the first treatment.