

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HEALTHY SKIN
HEALTHY HEART
LET'S END RHD TOGETHER

REMOVING SCABIES FROM YOUR HOUSE

To be effectively treated for scabies, you need to treat yourself and also remove scabies from your household.

Q Why is it important to remove scabies from your household?

A Scabies is an extremely hardy and tiny mite. It can stay outside the human host for up to 3 days. It can spread from direct skin to skin contact and sharing of clothing and towels. It is important to treat yourself and your family, while also removing scabies from your house.

Q When do I need to wash my linens, clothes and towels?

A It is important to wash your clothes and linen on the same day your family receives scabies treatment.

Q What do I need to wash?

A Linen (sheets, mattress protectors, pillow cases, blankets), clothing, and towels that have been used in the last 3 days should be washed in a hot water cycle for more than 10 minutes and/or dried in a tumble dryer on the hottest setting for more than 20 minutes.

Q How do I wash everything?

A High temperatures kills scabies mites. A very hot washing machine cycle (temperatures above 50°C for more than 10 minutes) or a very hot tumble dryer (for more than 20 minutes) will kill scabies mites.

Q Do I have to hang my clothes out?

Hanging clothes out or putting clothes in a dryer will remove the mite. A minimum of 20 minutes is required on the very hot tumble dryer cycle to kill the mite. Hanging clothes out in the sun to dry will also kill the scabies mite.

Q I live with a lot of people and can't wash all the clothes in one day, what should I do?

A If you can't wash all your laundry on the day you receive scabies treatment, it is recommended that you place all clothes, linens and towels in plastic garbage bags, tie the bags closed and leave them for at least 3 days or until you are able to wash all your laundry. This will kill the scabies mite.

Q What about mattresses and pillows?

A Place mattresses and pillows outside in the sun for the day. Lean them against a wall (keep them off the ground) and flip them over after three hours.

Q How do I clean my soft furnishings, car seats and couches?

A Soft furnishings, carpets and car seats can be vacuumed (the vacuum will need a very fine vacuum filter) to remove any mites.

The vacuum bag should then be discarded, or if it has no bag, the vacuum should be left in an isolated space for at least 3 days to kill any mites in the vacuum cleaner.

Q If my baby doesn't have scabies but there are people in the family with scabies, do I need to wash the car seats?

A Yes, the car seats should be vacuumed and where possible any removable coverings on car seats should be washed.

Q What if I don't have hot water or a clothesline?

A If you do not have hot water or a clothesline, please report to your rental agency.

Q What if I don't have a washing machine?

A Please visit your local laundromat.

REMOVING SCABIES FROM YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Q What if I don't have a washing machine large enough to wash my blankets and doona?

A Please visit your local laundromat, which will have a larger washing machine and dryer available.

Q What if it is raining during the Healthy Skin Healthy Heart Program?

A If it is raining during Healthy Skin Healthy Heart Program, try to access tumble dryers through your friends and family, or at the local laundromat.

Q How can a person remove scabies that might be on their floors?

A Hard furnishings and floors can be wiped down with detergent and water or mopped with floor cleaner.

Q Can scabies be spread by swimming in a pool or creek?

A Scabies mites do not spread in a swimming pool or creek as mites do not live in water. Scabies spread by prolonged skin-to-skin contact or by sharing items of clothing, bedding, towels, or linen with someone with scabies.

Q Can they live in my clothes?

A Yes, scabies mites can live in clothes. They can only live there for 3 days but if someone wears your clothes, the mites can spread to them from your clothes. Washing your clothes in hot water will kill the mite.

If clothes can't be washed in hot water, it is recommended that you place all clothes in sealed plastic garbage bags for at least 3 days to make sure the mites have died.

Q Have I got scabies from my dogs?

A No, dogs are infected with different types of scabies mite that do not affect humans. However, it is important to keep your dogs clean and treated for parasites.

Q Does soap kill scabies mites?

A No. Soap, detergents or alcohol rubs do not kill scabies mites.

Q I can't wash my shoes or battery-operated soft toy. What do I do?

A Items which cannot be hot washed or dried such as shoes or delicate items can be placed in a sealed plastic bag and isolated for at least 3 days.

Q Should insecticide or fly spray be used in my house?

A While fumigation has been recommended in the past, it is no longer a suggested treatment method for removing scabies from the environment.

Q What happens if I have been referred for an environmental health support?

A During your skin health check, your household may be referred for an environmental health support. It will involve a house visit to identify additional methods to remove scabies from your household environment. This is a voluntary process and consent is required for a team from council and Darling Downs Public Health Unit to visit your household.

Q Are these methods related to hygiene?

A It is important to note that these measures are not related to improving hygiene, rather to physically removing mites.

Q How can I avoid getting scabies again?

A Wash your clothes, bed sheets, towels, pillows and bed covers (e.g. doonas, blankets) in hot water. Avoid sharing clothes or towels to reduce the chance of spreading scabies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Darling Downs Health Public Health Unit on 07 4699 8240.



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