

SCABIES

Q What is scabies?

A Scabies is caused by a small mite that burrows under a person's skin to lay its eggs. It makes the skin very itchy and can leave red bumps that look like small pimples on the skin. Because it is very itchy, it can make you scratch which can cause a skin infection.

Q How do I know if I have it?

A You might have scabies if you have a rash on your skin which is very itchy. Sometimes if you have had scabies for a long time, it can stop being itchy, but the rash and red bumps stay on the skin.

Q How did I catch it?

A Scabies is spread by skin contact with other people. It is usually spread by prolonged contact (more than just a quick handshake). Scabies can spread from people in your house or from people you have sex with. Scabies is also spread from shared bedding, towels or clothes.

Q Can you catch scabies from water?

A No, you can't catch scabies from water. The mite can't live in water, only on a person.

Q Did I catch this from animals?

A No, you can't catch scabies from animals (including pets). The scabies mites only comes from humans. Other mites can cause problems in pets but these can't cause scabies in humans.

Q Can I catch scabies from dirt?

A No, scabies can't live in dirt. The mite can only live on humans. They can sometimes live for a short time in clothes or bed sheets or towels, but only for 2-3 days before they die.

Q Why do we need to treat scabies?

A Scabies can be very itchy and uncomfortable so treating it can fix this problem. The itch from scabies can be very severe and make it hard to sleep. This can make it hard for children to concentrate at school or adults to concentrate at work.

Scabies can also cause skin infections because it is very itchy, which makes you scratch. Skin infections can make you very sick and can even lead to kidney disease or heart disease, so it is important to treat scabies to prevent infections.

Q How long will it take to feel better after I am treated?

A It can take 2-4 weeks for the rash and itch to stop after the scabies is treated. This does not mean that the treatment is not working. If your skin is still itchy after 2-4 weeks or if you are getting more red bumps or rash, see your doctor.

Q What kills scabies mites?

A Scabies mites can be killed by medication (which can be a cream or a tablet). On clothes or bedding/towels, scabies mites can be killed by washing in hot water or by leaving these items for 3 days without anyone touching them (the mite can't live for more than 3 days without a human). Furniture and carpets can be vacuumed to remove mites.

Q What is crusted scabies?

A Some people can get a very severe form of scabies which is called crusted scabies. They may need extra treatment at home or at the hospital.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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



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