



MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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SCABIES

What are they?

Scabies are microscopic bugs (mites) that burrow under the skin and deposit their eggs. The rash of scabies comes from an allergic reaction to the mites' body, eggs and excretions. Once the mites get into the skin, it takes 2-4 weeks for the rash to appear.

How do you get scabies?

Scabies are transmitted by close personal contact, such as sharing a bed. Infants and children can also become infested through casual contact with schoolmates, neighbors, or children in a daycare setting. Scabies are extremely contagious!

What are the symptoms?

- **Itchiness.** Severe itching that may develop even before the rash appears; it is often worse at night.
- **Rash.** In children and adolescents, the rash consists of red or fluid-filled bumps that may be located next to a burrow track. The areas between the fingers and toes are often involved; the head, palms and soles are usually spared. Other commonly involved areas include the wrists, outer border of the hands, outer surfaces of the elbows, armpits, female nipples, male genitalia, and buttocks. In infants, the bumps are more scattered and are more likely to involve the head, armpits, palms and soles.

How do you treat scabies?

Several topical medications are available for the treatment of scabies. Frequently, it is recommended that all members of household be treated as well as those who are close personal contacts (ie, sexual) of the infested person. Permethrin (Elimite) can be used. The agent should be applied all over the body, from the neck down, paying special attention to the preferred sites. Children can return to school after one treatment.

The itching and rash may last for 3-4 weeks after treatment. To reduce itching, you can try lukewarm Oatmeal baths or topical Aveeno anti-itch cream. Oral antihistamines like Benadryl are also effective. .

How do you prevent recurrence?

- Check all family members; the entire family may need to be treated.
- After treatment, all clothing and bed linens and any apparel worn in the preceding days should be washed. Blankets can be put away in plastic bags for 1 week (mites can't survive off the human body after 3 days).