



# Central Michigan District Health Department

*Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities*



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## Scabies

### What is scabies?

Scabies is a skin condition caused by mites (which are a parasite). It commonly leads to intense itching and a pimple-like skin rash that may affect various areas of the body. Scabies is contagious and can spread quickly in areas where people are in close physical contact.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

Common symptoms of itching and pimple-like rash may affect much of the body or be limited common places such as: between the fingers, wrists, elbow, armpit, genitals, nipple, waist, buttocks, and shoulder blades.

Symptoms affect the head, face, neck, palms and soles in infants and very young children, but usually not adults or older children.

When a person is first infested with scabies mites, it usually takes 2-6 weeks for symptoms to appear. If a person has had scabies before, symptoms appear 1-4 days after exposure.

### How is it spread?

Scabies is usually spread by skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies. It can also be spread indirectly by sharing items such as clothing, towels, or bedding used by an infested person. In crowded conditions where there is close body and skin contact, scabies is spread easily.

### What is the treatment?

Scabies should be treated with topical creams that can kill the mites, which are available by prescription from your health care provider. In addition to the infested person, treatment also is recommended for people they have been in contact with.

To disinfect items:

- Wash them in hot water and dry on high heat.
- Store items that can't be washed in a sealed plastic bag for at least 72 hours.
- Thoroughly clean and vacuum rooms.

### How can I protect myself?

Scabies is prevented by avoiding direct skin-to-skin contact with an infested person or with items such as clothing or bedding used by an infested person.

*Please visit us at our website [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)*

Early detection, treatment, and implementation of appropriate isolation and infection control practices are essential in preventing scabies outbreaks.