

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

## SCABIES

### What is Scabies?

Scabies is a parasitic disease of the skin caused by a mite. A diagnosis is made by recovering the mite from its burrow and identifying it microscopically.

### What are the signs and symptoms of a Scabies infection?

The mite burrows beneath the skin laying its eggs and leaving tracks. Lesions are prominent between fingers, wrists, elbows, the belt line, and thighs. In addition lesions are prominent on the external genitalia in men, nipples, abdomen and lower portion of the buttocks in women. In infants the head, neck, palms, and soles may be involved. Itching is intense, especially at night. Secondary infections often occur from scratching the skin lesions.

### How are Scabies infections spread?

Scabies is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact. It can also be transferred from clothing, bed linens, and furniture of infected persons.

### What is the incubation period of Scabies and how long is it contagious?

The incubation period varies from one to four days or as long as two to six weeks. It is communicable until the mites and eggs are destroyed by treatment

### What should I do if I think I have a Scabies infection?

Persons with the above symptoms should see their physician for diagnosis. Children should **NOT** remain in a school/day care center until adequately treated and may need a note of clearance before being readmitted.

### How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Scabies infection?

To prevent spreading the infection to others a thin layer of medicated lotion should be applied to all portions of the skin except the head and neck. Dress in freshly laundered clothing and leave the medication on the skin and left on the recommended time before washing off. Clothing and linens should be thoroughly washed (in hot water) and dried in the clothes dryer. A spray may be obtained for furniture, carpet, and mattresses. In addition, direct skin to skin contact with an infected person, their clothing, or bedding should be avoided.

**CAUTION:** Itching may persist for one to two weeks and should **not** be regarded as a drug failure or re-infestation. Over treatment is common and should be avoided because of the toxicity of some of the medicated lotions.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County, Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orchd.com/generalHealth/epidemiology/index.asp>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/>, or the OCHD School Health website at <http://orchd.com/personalHealth/schoolHealth/index.asp> for additional information.

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