



Scabies

Description

Scabies is a parasitic infestation caused by tiny mites (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) which live just under the skin surface. They may be transmitted through sexual contact or occasionally by contact with infested clothing, bed linen, and/or towels. They cannot be seen by the naked eye but their burrows can be seen and itching will result. All the stages in the life cycle of the mite take place on or just under the skin.

Symptoms

Symptoms appear after the female mites start their reproductive burrows. They usually appear as thin red lines on the inside of elbows or knees; between fingers or toes; on the waist or abdomen; on the pubic or groin area; on the penis and scrotum or around the nipples.

After a few weeks, the body develops an allergic response resulting in a generalized skin rash consisting of red simple-like, itchy spots and blotches. The itching is the most bothersome aspect and leads to intense scratching, particularly at night.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis is made by a health care provider taking a scraping of the skin and/or viewing the mite or eggs under magnification.

Treatment

- Prescription creams developed to kill mites and eggs are applied to the skin surface from the neck down and washed off after 8 hours.
- Although the allergic response of a red itchy rash may take about a week to clear up completely, the scabies/mites should be eliminated.
- Frequently, an antihistamine is prescribed to reduce the itching caused by the allergic response.
- Disinfect clothing and linen by washing them in hot water, by dry cleaning them, or by removing them from human exposure for 1 or 2 weeks. Clothing and linen should not be shared. If clothing and linen are not thoroughly cleaned, re-infestation is probable.
- Avoid close physical or sexual contact until after treatment and a follow-up exam to insure elimination.
- If left untreated the scabies will continue to reproduce. Secondary infections can occasionally occur, leading to spreading scabs.

Prevention

- Since scabies can be spread from person to person contact, abstaining from any sexual activity is the best method for preventing transmission.
- If symptoms are present, it is advisable to have a general check-up to make sure no other diseases have been contracted.
- All sexual partners and those with close physical contact should be checked to see if they need treatment.

For More Information:

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Health Promotion.619-594-4133		@AZTEChealth
Visit Our Website at	shs.sdsu.edu	American Social Health Association (ASHA)	
		National STD Hotline.800-227-8922