



Scabies

Patient information leaflet



GIG
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NHS
WALES



Common Ailments Service

Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your or your child's condition.

Scabies is a common skin condition caused by tiny mites. The female mites burrow under skin to lay their eggs, leaving burrows that look like a raised line with a dot at one end. An itchy, red rash or spots usually appear on the skin. The rash often starts between the fingers but can spread across the whole body, apart from the head. Itching tends to be worse at night and can make sleeping difficult. Scratching the rash can cause skin infections. Scabies can make skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis worse.

Scabies is not usually serious but it is very infectious. It is spread by skin-to-skin contact. After skin contact with a person who has scabies, it can take up to 8 weeks for the rash to appear. Scabies has nothing to do with poor hygiene.



Treatment and Prevention

Medicines that can help

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you or your child.

Scabies will not go away by itself. It is treated with a cream or liquid that you spread over your whole body.

Permethrin cream is usually tried first. If this is not suitable for you, or if you have tried it and it has not worked, your pharmacist may recommend that you try **malathion liquid**.

It is important to treat all members of your household at the same time even if they do not have symptoms. See your doctor before treating children under 2 years old. Anyone you have had sexual contact with in the past month should also be treated.

To stop babies and children sucking treatment from their hands, put socks or mittens on them.

The cream or liquid can catch fire easily. Avoid smoking or going near unprotected flames when you are using them. Your clothing and bedding can become fire hazards if the cream or liquid soaks into them.

To help the itch

Some people find that the itching makes sleeping a problem. Your pharmacist may recommend an antihistamine called **chlorphenamine** to help you sleep and reduce scratching. Chlorphenamine comes as tablets or an oral solution.

The itching can carry on for up to 4 weeks after the treatment has killed the mites. If this happens, **crotamiton cream** may help to stop the itching.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).



Treatment and Prevention

To stop scabies spreading

While you are having treatment:

- wash all bedding, towels and clothes at 60°C (or higher) and dry them in a hot dryer, or seal them in a plastic bag for at least 72 hours
- stay away from work or school for 24 hours after the first treatment
- contact anyone you have had close contact with over the past month and advise them to get treatment
- avoid close physical contact until you have completed the treatment course
- do not share bedding, clothing or towels



When to Get Help

Contact your **GP** or call **111** if:

- your skin is still itching 4 weeks after treatment has finished
- you have tried 2 courses of treatment and they have not worked
- you feel very unwell or have a temperature
- you have very red or broken skin that may be swollen or hot to touch
- you have a weakened immune system, for example from cancer treatment or steroid therapy

If you are worried that your or your child's condition is not getting better, or is getting worse, talk to your GP.



More information

For more information on scabies or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

NHS 111 Wales: <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/s/article/scabies/>

Patient UK: <https://patient.info/skin-conditions/skin-rashes/scabies>

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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