

# Understanding Scabies

## What you need to know

Scabies is a common skin condition that can affect anyone, but it's easy to treat when you know what to do. This factsheet provides essential information about scabies, its symptoms, treatment and prevention.

## What is scabies?

Scabies is caused by tiny mites that burrow under the skin, leading to intense itching and a rash. It spreads easily through close contact, such as hugging or sharing bedding and clothes.

## Signs to look out for

- itchy skin, especially at night
- small red bumps or burrows, often between fingers, wrists, elbows, armpits, groin and creases of your bottom
- rash that spreads over time.

## How to treat scabies

Treatment usually involves a special cream or lotion you can get via prescription from your doctor or over the counter at your local pharmacy. Sometimes, a tablet prescribed by your doctor is used instead. It's important that everyone in the household is treated at the same time, even if they don't have symptoms.

## Practical tips

### The day after your first treatment:

- wash all your towels and bedding in water that is 60°C or higher
- wash all your clothes in water that is 60°C or higher
- any clothes or items that can't be washed should be put in a sealed bag for 8 days
- if possible, place mattresses, pillows and blankets in the sun
- thoroughly vacuum the house and soft furnishings, such as lounges
- you should have no body contact for 3 days with items that cannot be washed or put in the sun.

We know some of this stuff can be hard to do. If you need support, sing out to Mob Link, details below.

If you have scabies, you should stay home until 24 hours after treatment to prevent it spreading to other people. Speak to your doctor about how long you should be on leave from school and work.

## Why act quickly?

Scabies won't go away on its own. Treating it early helps prevent spreading it to family and friends.

## Think you or your family might have scabies?

Contact your local clinic today for advice and treatment by phoning ahead. We can advise how we can treat you safely.

You can also call **Mob Link** on **1800 254 354, 7 days a week, 365 days a year from 7am-8pm.**

## Additional Resources

For more information, check out these trusted resources:

- **Healthdirect** – [Scabies](#)
- **Royal Children's Hospital** – [Scabies Symptoms and Treatment](#)
- **NT Government** – [Scabies](#)