

CENTRAL KAROO

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



SECTION: MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES

ABOUT SCABIES



What is Scabies?

Scabies is a contagious skin disease especially common in children like any other infectious diseases caused by very small, wingless insects or mites called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. Scabies mites burrow into the skin producing pimple-like irritations or burrows.

Signs & Symptoms

Itchy rash in the web spaces between fingers and toes, ankles, elbows, knees, underarms, wrists, pelvic and pubic areas (scratching/ itching is more severe at night).



How it is spread?

Scabies is caused by tiny organism called itchy mites (similar to ticks, but tiny and smaller). Once it penetrates the skin, it burrows under the skin and cause intense itching.

1. Passes from person to person by direct skin to skin contact
2. Using of clothes and bedding used by infected person without prior disinfection.
3. Symptoms will appear from two to six weeks in people who have not previously been exposed to scabies infestations.
4. People who have had a previous bout with scabies mites may show symptoms within one to four days after subsequent re-exposure.
5. A person is able to spread scabies until mites and eggs are destroyed by treatment.
6. Scabies infestation can affect people from all socioeconomic levels without regard to age, sex, race

or standard of personal hygiene.

7. Clusters of cases, or outbreaks, are occasionally seen in nursing homes, institutions and child care centres.

Prevention

1. Personal hygiene—taking a bath at least once a day: -
 - Wash and iron clothing because ironing kills the eggs of the organism.
 - Wash bedding regularly and hang them in the sun so that the eggs can be killed by the sunrays
2. Limit contact with persons who are infected with scabies.
3. Avoid sharing of clothing and bedding.
4. Do not share bath water as that provides a media for the spread of the infection.
5. People who collect water from stagnant water sources should boil the water before bathing.

6. Keep fingernails and toe nails short and clean to prevent germs

Treatment

Visit the clinic to obtain treatment if infected.

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2. Scrub/ wash the body with warm water and soap and dry the body well before applying the treatment.
3. Apply treatment correctly as follows:
 - Apply the treatment from neck all over the body except the face and head, using a cotton wool and allow it to dry for 5 minutes.
 - Do not wash the treatment for the next 24 hours.

- Wear clean and ironed clothes.
- Wash infected clothes with boiling water.
- Complete all treatment as per clinic instruction.

4. Skin lotions containing permethrin, lindane or crotamiton are available through a physician's prescription for the treatment of scabies.

Control

1. Learners with Scabies should be excluded from school until they have been treated. They can however, return to school the day after treatment.
2. All household contacts must be treated to prevent re-infection (including those that do not have the rash).

Other Control Measures include: -

1. All members of the households should be examined.
2. Thoroughly wash the whole body with a mild soap and warm water, scrubbing the affected areas with a wash cloth.
3. Dry well with clean towel.
4. Put on clean, washed clothes after drug treatment.
5. The entire house may need to be cleaned with a disinfectant.



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