



## Hawaii State Department of Health

### Disease Investigation Branch

Oahu 586-4586, Maui 984-8213, Hilo 933-0912,

Kona 322-4877, Kauai 241-3563

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## Scabies

(acariasis)

### What is scabies?

Scabies is an infestation of the skin caused by the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*. These mites dig under the skin and cause intense itching, especially at night.

### How do you get it?

Scabies is spread by close, person-to-person contact (including sexual activity), and by sharing clothing or bedding used recently by a person infested with mites.

### What are the symptoms of scabies?

The most noticeable symptom of scabies is the intense itching it produces. The itching and rash may affect most of the body though it is most noticeable between the fingers, around the wrists, elbows, armpits, nipples, belt line, abdomen, genitals (sex organs), and lower buttocks.

### When do symptoms start?

The itching usually starts 2 to 6 weeks after infestation with mites. Individuals who have had scabies previously develop symptoms earlier (in 1 to 4 days) following another exposure to the mites.

### What is the treatment for scabies?

Your physician can prescribe treatment for scabies. Always follow instructions from your doctor on how to use the scabies treatment.

Symptoms may continue for weeks after treatment because the symptoms are due to an allergic reaction to the mites and their feces. If itching persists, worsens or new rash occurs, a second application of medication may be necessary.

### Should persons infested with mites be excluded from work or school?

Yes. Mite-infested persons are contagious until they receive treatment. Once treatment has started, however, they can return to school or work on the following day.

### How can you keep from getting scabies?

Avoid direct skin-to-skin contact with the person that has scabies.

Do not share clothing or bedding belonging to a person with scabies.

Wash clothing, towels and bedding in detergent and hot water and dry in hot dryer or dry clean to kill mites and eggs. This should be done at the same time that you treat for scabies with medications.

For more information, see the CDC's website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/>