

Infection Prevention Quick Guide: Scabies

Scabies is caused by a parasite (mite) that burrows into the skin, causing intense itching and a skin rash. Scabies is usually spread by direct, prolonged skin-to-skin contact. It can sometimes be spread by contact with clothing, towels, or bedding used by a person with scabies. Crusted (Norwegian) scabies is a more severe form of scabies and is very contagious. Without proper infection prevention strategies, scabies can spread in nursing homes and may cause outbreaks.

Point your phone's camera at the QR code to learn how to examine for scabies (CDC).



Infection Prevention Checklist

1. **Resident Placement and Transmission-Based Precautions:** Place residents with suspected or confirmed scabies on Contact Precautions in a private room with their own bathroom. If there are no private rooms, you may cohort residents with scabies together, taking into consideration the residents' multidrug-resistant organism status.
 - a. Avoid direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with items such as clothing or bedding that have been used by a resident with scabies.
 - b. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment: **gown and gloves** upon room entry.
 - c. Perform good **hand hygiene**, especially after removing gloves.
 - d. Use **dedicated or disposable equipment** (e.g., stethoscope, blood pressure cuff) when possible. If equipment must be reused, clean and disinfect it before use on another person.
 - e. Restrict residents with scabies to their room, except for medically necessary care. Meals should also be served in the room.
 - f. Continue precautions until 24 hours after starting effective therapy.
 - **If crusted scabies**, continue precautions until skin scrapings are negative.
2. **Treatment:**
 - a. Prompt treatment is important to prevent the spread of scabies in the facility.
 - b. Identify and treat all persons having prolonged, direct skin-to-skin contact with an infested person before they were treated.
 - This includes identifying and notifying at-risk residents and staff who are no longer at the facility.
 - **If crusted scabies**, include those who may have been exposed to clothing, bedding, or furniture used by the person with scabies.
 - c. Staff generally can return to work the day after receiving a dose of treatment. Additional precautions may be needed for symptomatic staff who provide hands on care.



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3. Surveillance:

- Monitor additional residents and staff for signs and symptoms of illness.
- Suspected cases should be evaluated and confirmed by obtaining skin scrapings.

4. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection:

- Machine wash and dry bedding and clothing of residents with scabies using the hot water and hot dryer cycles.
- If crusted scabies**, clean the resident's room regularly.
- Thoroughly clean and vacuum the room when a resident with scabies leaves the facility or moves to a new room.

5. Partner With Public Health: Report a suspected outbreak to your local health department (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/>)

- Outbreak = number of cases is above your facility baseline (e.g., 3 or more cases of residents with scabies-like rash within a 72-hour period)

Scabies: How to Share the News



1. To the resident and those authorized to receive health information:

You (or your loved one) have tested positive for scabies. Scabies is a parasite that can spread from person to person. We will be taking extra precautions like wearing a gown and gloves and giving you care in your room, whenever possible, to make sure that scabies doesn't spread to others. We will also be washing our hands a lot and encourage you to do the same.

- ### 2. To healthcare workers:
- This resident has scabies and requires Contact Precautions while they are infectious. *[Note how long precautions will be needed, based on the type of scabies]*. It's important to avoid skin-to-skin contact with the resident. You must wear gown and gloves every time you go into the room, dedicate equipment, when possible (or clean and disinfect equipment before use on another resident), and always do good hand hygiene. Scabies can cause healthcare outbreaks. This puts all our residents at risk, so it is important to be consistent with these infection prevention measures.

Additional Resources



CDC Scabies website (<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/index.html>)

- Prevention strategies, frequently asked questions
- Diagnosis, treatment, and resources for healthcare professionals