

## Information for parents / carers of a child with Scabies



### What is Scabies?

Scabies is a common itchy skin condition caused by the human scabies mites that burrows in the skin surface. It commonly affects the young and old but can affect any age.

### How can you acquire scabies?

Scabies mites are tiny eight legged parasites, smaller than a pinhead with the adult only measuring about 0.4mm long. They are usually contracted by prolonged skin to skin contact with someone who already has scabies. On very rare occasions they can be picked up from objects such as clothing and bed linen. Pets do not spread them and being dirty does not cause them.

### What are the symptoms?

About a month after contact with an infected person or object itching will start. This affects the body and limbs but spares the neck and head, except in infants. The itch is often worse at night and it is common for several people in the same family to be affected at around the same time.

The scabies rash is a mixture of scratch marks and red scaly areas. Later it can become infected and develop pus spots. Burrow lines may appear on the sides of the fingers and hands, and around the wrists, ankles, and feet. These present as inconspicuous thin grey wavy lines of up to 1cm in length.

### How is scabies diagnosed?

1. Doctor removing a mite from a burrow and viewing it under a microscope.
2. Scrapings of a burrow can also be viewed under a microscope
3. History and type of rash.

### How is scabies treated?

Scabies can last for months or even years when not treated. It will clear quickly and completely with the correct treatment. Itching however can continue for a few weeks, despite the treatment having killed the mites.

There are several preparations available for the treatment of scabies. Of these Permethrin® (Lyclear) is the one most commonly used in Ireland.



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**Detailed instructions will be issued with your treatment and they will be based on the following principles:**

- Ensure the skin is cool and dry before applying treatment if a bath has been given do not apply treatment immediately.
- If using steroid ointments on the skin you will be advised regarding application of these.
- Apply treatment as prescribed. Check individual product information sheets for the Instructions regarding application and removal.
- The mites can affect any area of the body; the treatment must be applied to all areas from the neck down in a child over 2 years.
- Face, scalp and soles may need to be treated in the under twos. **Pay particular attention to the following areas, between the fingers and toes, wrists, ankles, genitalia, buttocks, under the finger and toe nails and soles of the feet.**
- Reapply the lotion when washing hands paying particular attention to area under nails.
- Wash all bed linen and contaminated clothing in normal wash cycle. Out door clothing can be left unworn for 48 hours.

**Repeat treatment one week later to deal with mites that have hatched out from eggs since initial treatment.**

Scabies infestation will resolve if you follow the instructions as directed

**It is important to remember that all contacts need to be treated at the same time regardless of whether they are itching or not.**

**If you require assistance please contact the Dermatology department on  
01/4282541/4282532/4282646**

### **Additional information**

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