

# Scabies

## Clinical Description:

Scabies is a skin infection caused by the burrowing itch mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which can only be seen with a microscope. It is characterized by itching, particularly at night, and blister-like sores in the burrows of the skin, which may become infected. These sores are especially prevalent in the webs between the fingers, the heels of the palms, the wrists, armpits, buttocks, genitalia, and elbows. Nipples may also be affected in older females.

## Incubation Period:

The incubation period for scabies ranges from 2 - 6 weeks for the first infection; for subsequent infections the incubation may be as short as a few days.

## Mode of Transmission:

Scabies is transmitted by close (including sexual) contact with an affected individual. Contact with bedding, towels, or clothing (including undergarments) of an infected person can be a means of spreading scabies.

## Period of Communicability:

A person can spread scabies from the time of infection until the mites and eggs are destroyed by treatment.

## Exclusion/Reporting:

Infested persons should be excluded from school until the day after treatment. Scabies is not listed as a reportable communicable disease under Rule 410 IAC 1-2.3 at [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm\\_dis\\_rule\(1\).pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule(1).pdf).

## Prevention/Care:

- Students or staff may return to school a day after treatment is started or as directed by the healthcare provider.
- Presence of scabies does not necessarily indicate poor hygiene or unhygienic environment.
- Clothing and bedclothes of the infected person and of all the people in their household should be well-laundered.
- Bed mattresses and upholstered furniture should be vacuumed thoroughly.
- Insecticide treatment of the home or any school facility is not recommended.
- Caregivers who have prolonged skin to skin contact with a student infested with scabies may benefit from prophylactic treatment.

## Outbreaks:

According to the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) the definition of an outbreak means cases of disease occurring in a community, region, or particular population at a rate in excess of that which is normally expected. The local health department should be notified of suspected and/or documented cases of Scabies if the number of cases is in excess of what is normally experienced in your school or occur with a common connection (same class, sports team, etc.). For additional information and recommendations regarding the

preparation for, and the management of an outbreak situation in a school setting, see Appendix A, “Managing an Infectious Disease Outbreak In a School Setting.”

**Other Resources:**

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):  
<http://bit.ly/12lJLfd>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/>