

Asheboro Dermatology & Skin Surgery Center

Scabies

Scabies (from the Latin, *scabere*, which means "to scratch") is one of the most common skin conditions in the world. At any given time, over 100 million people throughout the world have scabies. It is caused by a very tiny mite which burrows in the skin. It is easily contagious with skin to skin contact. Entire families are often infected. Upon first infestation, it may take an individual over a month to begin itching, but if a person is reinfected, the itching can return within a day or two. This is related to the fact that the "itch" of scabies is primarily an "allergic" response by the person to the mite. Some patients only harbor a few scabies mites on their entire body, but they itch all over. Itching is usually worse at night, and itching is usually absent from the neck up.

Treatment usually consists of a topical medication (e.g. Permethrin) and sometimes an oral medication (e.g. Ivermectin or Stromectol). A typical treatment course requires an application of the prescribed cream from the ears down OVER THE ENTIRE BODY (not just itchy areas). The cream is left on overnight and showered off in the AM. On the day following treatment, the patient washes all of their bed linens and all clothes worn over the prior week in a warm wash. The cream treatment is usually repeated overnight in 1 week, but the washing regimen need not be repeated. If oral medication is prescribed, it should be taken as directed.