Scabies is an infection of the skin caused by a mite that burrows in the skin. Itching starts 2-4 weeks after infection and is often severe enough to disturb sleep. The rash usually involves finger webs, elbows, wrists, waist, under the arms, under the breasts, and in the pelvic area.

Scabies is spread by close contact with other infected people. It can also spread by sharing infected person’s personal items such as clothing or bed linen. This type of infestation is not necessarily limited to crowded and unsanitary conditions. Mites can survive off the body for up to five days.

### Treatment
- Take a warm, soapy bath or shower using an antiseptic soap (i.e. Dial, Safeguard, or others)
- Dry thoroughly
- Treatments with Permethrin Cream or similar medication will be prescribed. Massage the medication into the skin from the neck down. Pay particular attention to saturate the skin folds between the fingers, toes, and genital areas. Reapply to hands if accidentally washed off.
- Leave medication on 8 hours or overnight-unless directed otherwise by your practitioner. Then, wash off thoroughly in the shower.
- Wash clothes, bedding, and towels in hot water on day of treatment.
- Vacuuming is the safest and best way to prevent the spread of scabies from furniture. Dispose of the vacuum bag after vacuuming.
- Items that cannot be laundered should be double bagged in plastic and kept sealed for 10 days. The mites will have died in that time period.

### Note:
- It is very important to treat any other close contacts because Scabies is very contagious.
- You must inform your practitioner if you suspect pregnancy or if you are breast-feeding, as certain medications may not be safely used.
- Itching is thought to be the result of a hypersensitivity reaction by the host to foreign material (mites, eggs, mite feces) in the skin. As a result, itching may continue for 1-2 weeks after successful treatment.

### Suggestions for relieving itching after treatment are:
- Use mild soaps such as Dove or Tone.
- Take short lukewarm showers- not hot.
- Apply a thin film of moisturizer after a shower and at bedtime.
- Over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream may help the itching.

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