

Understanding Scabies: Symptoms, Causes and Treatment Options

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Introduction

Scabies is a highly contagious skin disease caused by a tiny mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. hominis. This disease is characterized by an intense itching sensation and the appearance of red, raised bumps on the skin. It can affect people of all ages, genders and races, but it is more common in crowded living conditions, such as prisons, nursing homes and refugee camps. Scabies is transmitted through skin to skin contact with an infected person. The mites can also be spread through contaminated bedding, clothing and furniture. Once the mites burrow into the skin, they lay eggs, which hatch in a few days and the larvae grow into adult mites. The infestation can cause intense itching, especially at night and the scratching can lead to skin damage and secondary infections.

Description

The symptoms of scabies typically begin two to six weeks after exposure to the mites. The most common symptom is intense itching, which is often worse at night and can be so severe that it interferes with sleep. The itching is caused by the body's allergic reaction to the mites, their eggs and their waste products. Other symptoms include small, raised bumps or blisters on the skin, especially in the folds of the skin, such as between the fingers, on the wrists, elbows, armpits, around the waist and on the buttocks. In severe cases, the entire body can become covered in a rash.

The diagnosis of scabies is typically made by a healthcare provider who examines the skin and looks for signs of the mites or their eggs. A skin scraping may be taken to confirm the diagnosis. If scabies is suspected, it is important to seek medical treatment as soon as possible to prevent the spread of the disease. The treatment of scabies involves the use of topical medications, such as permethrin cream, benzyl benzoate lotion or sulfur ointment, which are applied to the skin to kill the mites and their eggs. These medications are usually applied to the entire body from the neck down and left on for 8-12 hours before being washed off. It may also be necessary to treat close contacts, such as family members and sexual partners, even if they do not have symptoms. In addition, all bedding, clothing and furniture should be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer to kill any mites or eggs.

In rare cases, oral medications, such as ivermectin, may be prescribed for the treatment of scabies. This medication is usually reserved for people who have a severe infestation or who have not responded to other treatments. Prevention is key when it comes to scabies. To prevent the spread of scabies, it is important to avoid close contact with infected individuals, wash bedding and clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer and avoid sharing personal items, such as towels and clothing. In addition, it is important to maintain good personal hygiene, such as washing hands frequently and taking regular showers or baths.

Conclusion

In conclusion, scabies is a highly contagious skin disease caused by a tiny mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. hominis. The disease is characterized by an intense itching sensation and the appearance of red, raised bumps on the skin. It can affect people of all ages, genders and races, but it is more common in crowded living conditions. Scabies is transmitted through skin to skin contact with an infected person or through contaminated bedding, clothing and furniture. The treatment of scabies involves the use of topical medications, such as permethrin cream, benzyl benzoate lotion or sulfur ointment, which are applied to the skin to kill the mites and their eggs.

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