

Scabies – Te waihakihaki

Scabies is a common skin condition caused by a parasitic mite (a living thing). It usually produces a very itchy rash, but the great news it can be treated.

What to look out for – symptoms

The scabies mite is so small that it cannot be seen by the naked eye. The female mite burrows under the skin and lives there causing the skin to become red and itchy.

If you or a member of your household has scabies, they'll typically develop an itchy rash anywhere from a few days up to 6 weeks after catching it.

- It can appear on the arms, legs, torso, wrists, under the armpits, between fingers and toes, as well as the groin and around the nipples.
- It does not usually affect the face and scalp unless the person is a young child or infant.
- The rash is usually worse at night or after a hot shower or bath.

Scabies is a common skin condition that affects people all over the world – anyone can get it. Treatment is important, as scabies won't go away on its own and can spread easily through close contact.

Ongoing scratching can make conditions like eczema or psoriasis worse and may lead to skin infections.

What to do if you think you or a member of your household has scabies

It's important for whānau to see their GP, Hauora Māori or Pacific provider for advice and treatment for the whole household. Pharmacies can also offer subsidised advice and treatment, including permethrin cream.

A script for permethrin cream is free for:

- Community Service Card Holders
- Those under 14 years or aged 65 years and older
- Holders of a prescription subsidy card

It will be \$5 for all other household members.

To get rid of scabies and make sure it does not come back, you need to carefully treat every member of the household and household items (like bedding and clothing) at the same time.

More information

We've created a guide to help support your household beat scabies – [Scabies – NPHS0027 – HealthEd](#)

To learn more about scabies see healthnz.govt.nz/scabies