

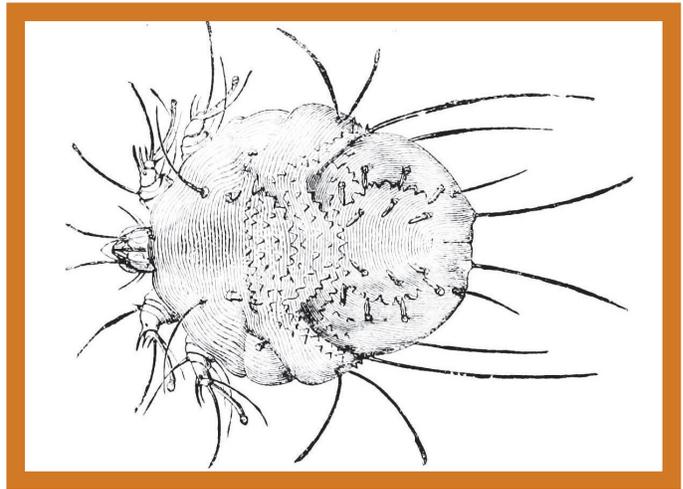
Scabies Mites

About Scabies Mites

Scabies mites (*Sarcoptes scabiei hominis*) are microscopic arthropods that infest human skin, causing severe itching and irritation. Scabies mites are found worldwide, but human infestations are most common in crowded conditions and where sanitation is poor, such as in developing countries.

Adult mites are less than 1 mm in length and cream or brownish in color. They have four pairs of legs attached to an oval body (see above right). It may not be possible to see scabies mites with the naked eye.

Scabies mites spend their entire life in a burrow excavated into the skin of the human host. However, infestations may spread from person to person through close personal contact between household members. Scabies is not generally spread through casual contact such as a handshake or hug.



Symptoms of Scabies Infestation

Scabies infestation must be diagnosed by a qualified medical professional.

Scabies infestations often involve only a 10-20 individual mites, but are likely to cause severe itching and uncontrollable scratching, even in areas away from the infestation. Secondary infection frequently occurs.

The skin burrows of the scabies mite often appear as grayish or skin-colored lines on the surface of the skin. They often appear between the fingers, in the folds of the wrist, elbow, or knee, on the shoulder blades, or near the genitals. Scabies may also cause a rash with small blisters.





Treatment for Scabies Mites

Scabies must be diagnosed and treated by a qualified medical professional. There are currently no effective non-prescription treatments for human scabies infestation.

Topical and oral treatments for human scabies infestation are available. These should always be used according to the label instructions. A second treatment 7-10 days after the initial treatment may be necessary to kill any surviving eggs or newly hatched larvae. Antibiotic treatment for secondary infection may also be needed.

All members of a household or persons who have had prolonged close contact with someone diagnosed with scabies should be treated at the same time to prevent re-infestation.

Items such as clothing, bedding, and towels should be washed in hot water and dried on the hot cycle or removed from skin contact for at least 72 hours to avoid re-infestation. Fumigation of living spaces for scabies mites is not necessary.

Itching and skin irritation may continue up to 4 weeks after treatment.

Getting Help

Scabies must be diagnosed and treated by a qualified medical professional. San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District does not provide treatment for human scabies infestation.

However, the District laboratory is happy to identify mite samples or suspected mite samples brought to the District office in a sealed bag or vial.

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

(650) 344 - 8592
1351 Rollins Road
Burlingame, CA 94010

Monday-Friday
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

www.smcmvcd.org



**SAN MATEO COUNTY
MOSQUITO & VECTOR
CONTROL DISTRICT**