

How long should I leave the treatment on?

This depends on the product used and may be 8 hours or 24 hours. You will need to check the information provided with the lotion or cream you are advised to use.

After the treatment

After the lotion/cream has been on for the appropriate time it should be washed off initially with plain cool water and no soap.

Once everything is washed off, a shower or bath with soap may be taken. Change clothes and wash as usual. Once treatment complete, you can return to work or school. You will not give scabies to anyone. *Treatment should be applied twice, a week apart, in cases of scabies.*

Itching may last for 2 to 3 weeks after full treatment. Use an anti-itch cream or tablets from your doctor or pharmacist, if needed. Do not be tempted to apply further anti scabies cream as this may aggravate the irritation. The skin will need time for the rash to settle down. If fresh spots appear go to your doctor. You may need more treatment or have a different problem.

What about mites in clothing and bedding

Classical Scabies: Mites die quickly if they fall off the body and do not spread on clothes, towels or bedding. Normal washing of clothes and bedding is recommended.

Crusted Scabies: There are so many mites, which may fall off as 'crusts' (like flakes of skin), that all clothing and bedding should be washed in a hot wash, and floors and chairs vacuumed.

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Reidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Patient Information Leaflet

Scabies: How is it treated?

How is it treated?

Scabies is treated with a lotion or cream. You can buy it from a chemist without a prescription, but it is better to see your doctor first. The treatment most commonly used (permethrin) is recommended to be **applied twice, one week apart**. Everyone should be treated at **the same time** so the mites do not pass back to a treated person.

Who needs treatment?

Everyone who has scabies needs 2 treatments, one week apart. Everyone who has had skin contact with someone with scabies for more than 5-10 minutes, e.g. partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, children, household contacts etc, need to be treated. Even those with no rash or itch, should have at least 1 treatment.

Putting on the lotion or cream

The treatment may be best applied at night. Take off all your clothes. Take off watches and rings. If it is not possible to remove a ring, move it to one side to treat the skin surface underneath.

Do not have a hot bath or shower before putting on the cream. However, do ensure that skin is clean, dry and cool.

Squeeze the cream/lotion into your palm.

Cream/lotion should be applied to the whole body below the jaw line, according to manufacturer's instructions.

In some cases, the treatment may need to extend to the scalp, neck, face and ears. This includes infants, children up to age two, the elderly, the immunocompromised, and those whose treatment has failed. Check with your doctor if this may apply to you or your family. If the treatment is to be applied to the head, avoid the eyes and in young children the mouth area, where the cream/lotion may be licked off.

Take special care to get it into the skin creases of the body – for instance, nipples and genitalia. Particular attention needs to be paid to the skin between the fingers and toes, under the nails and behind the ears. You will need someone else to apply lotion to your back. Brush some cream/lotion under the nails with a soft nail brush as mites can easily escape treatment in the thickened skin there. Nails should be trimmed and kept short for duration of treatment.

Let the cream/lotion dry before getting dressed or it may rub off (this takes 10-15 minutes).

Do the soles of your feet last after the body treatment has dried. This is best done with your feet resting on top of or dangling over the side of the bed. Put more cream/lotion on any parts you wash during the treatment period, e.g. hands or skin after changing nappies or incontinence wear while the lotion/cream is on the body. If you need to wash your hands often, use plastic gloves for dirty work during the treatment period.

Pay special attention to these areas when you put on the lotion or cream:

