

IPC Bulletin for Domiciliary Care

Issue No. 48 – September 2025



Produced by an NHS Community Infection Prevention and Control Team based in North Yorkshire for distribution to subscribers.

Scabies

Did you know:

- Scabies is a skin condition caused by tiny mites called *Sarcoptes scabiei* which burrow into the skin.
- There are 2 forms of scabies caused by the same mite, classical and crusted.
- The body reacts to the droppings and saliva which the mite deposits under the surface of the skin causing an itchy rash.
- The symptoms can be hard to recognise.
- Misdiagnosis is common because of its similarity to other itchy skin disorders, such as contact dermatitis, insect bites, and psoriasis. Diagnosis needs to be made by a GP or other clinician.



Transmission

- Can occur with frequent, prolonged skin-to-skin contact, without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), with a person who is infected with scabies (approximately 10 minutes uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact, e.g. holding hands).
- Evidence suggests that the mites can live away from a host for up to 4 days, but the role of bedding, clothing and/or towels in transmission is unclear. Transmission via clothing is considered much more likely from cases with crusted scabies due to the large number of mites present.

Incubation

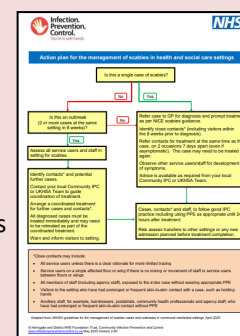
It can take 3-6 weeks for the symptoms to appear if a person has never had scabies. However, if a person has previously had scabies, symptoms can occur in 1-4 days.

Close contacts

A person who has had skin-to-skin contact with a symptomatic person without wearing appropriate PPE within 8 weeks of the person's diagnosis is classed as a 'close contact'.

Treatment

- Treatment consists of 2 whole body applications of permethrin 5% cream, one week apart. In some cases, a tablet, e.g. Ivermectin, may be prescribed.
- Treatment of all close contacts should be carried out at the same time. Treatment application instructions are available to download at: [Scabies treatment: Care Home and Domiciliary Care staff instructions for application of cream - Infection Prevention Control](#).
- If there is an outbreak of scabies in a communal setting, mass treatment of staff and service users may be required. Please refer to [Action plan for the management of scabies in health and social care settings - Infection Prevention Control](#).
- A disposable apron and gloves should be worn for direct contact and handling of clothing, bedding, towels and soft furnishings.



Further information: [Community IPC Scabies Policy for Domiciliary Care staff](#),

[UKHSA guidelines for the management of scabies cases and outbreaks in communal residential settings](#)

What's new:

LAST FEW PLACES AVAILABLE IPC training event for Care Homes and Domiciliary Care: 13th October, 2025. [Infection Prevention and Control Training Event for Care Home and Domiciliary Care staff October 2025 - Infection Prevention Control](#)

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download.

www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk

Call us on

01423 557340

