

Infection Prevention update: Scabies management







What is scabies?

Scabies is a skin infestation caused by very small mites. The mites don't jump or fly but burrow into the skin to lay their eggs. New insects hatch from the eggs and can be spread to other parts of the skin by scratching.

Scabies is spread by direct, prolonged physical contact including sexual activity. Scabies mites can survive away from humans for about 24 to 36 hours so, although less common, having contact with infected towels, bedding and undergarments of a person with scabies within 4 - 5 days of their last use may lead to transmission to others.

Symptoms of scabies:





-  Multiple pimple like spots on the skin between the fingers and toes, but also on wrists, elbows, armpits, lower abdomen and under breasts and genitals.
-  A bumpy rash, which is often difficult to see.
-  Small, clear, fluid-filled spots or lesions, that can blister or scab and become infected with bacteria - leading to a secondary infection that may require further treatment.
-  Intense itching of the skin, typically worst at night and after a hot bath or shower.



If you have a case of scabies in your facility, if possible, we strongly recommend examining other residents for signs of scabies and be aware of symptoms.

If you have scabies detected amongst your residents:

Scabies can be passed on to others until mites and eggs have been destroyed by treatment. Treatment should be repeated after 7-14 days. For more information, see [Better Health Channel](#).

-  Ensure staff follow the treatment regime completely and that the full tube of cream is used as instructed.
-  All bed linen needs to be changed every time treatment is applied.
-  Clothing, towels, bedclothes and slings used by the infested person in the 48 hours before treatment should be laundered using the hot cycle, or dry cleaned. Alternatively, items that can't be washed may be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for 1 week.
-  All horizontal and frequently touched surfaces must undergo a thorough clean using a detergent/disinfectant solution.

Environmental Health update: Spring cleaning

Spring is here, a time when we often clean and organise areas that may not have been accessed for some time during the winter months.



Western Public Health Unit is happy to assist with public health advice as needed and can be contacted as below



When spring cleaning, you might discover pests such as rodents and insects or signs that there has been pest activity. These signs might include gnaw marks, droppings, nesting materials, footprints or dead pests.

Pests can carry diseases and any evidence of their activity needs to be investigated. Take time to look both low and high; look at areas such as inside kitchen cabinets, baseboards, air vents, and near appliances. Also, check outside and look for gaps in the foundation, around storage sheds, and near pipes, gas lines, or electrical wiring.

Spring cleaning should also extend to outdoors areas. Stagnant water collected in birdbaths, disused pots, and other areas of standing water can attract pests and provide the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. Disused equipment, garden waste and uncut grass can also attract pests.

Any equipment which has been in storage over the winter months should be thoroughly cleaned before being put into use again.

Tips for spring cleaning:

-  When cleaning, it is important to read the instructions on the cleaning product label to ensure you are using them correctly. Some chemicals need to be left on surfaces for a set time period, known as the contact time, otherwise they will not work properly.
-  Immediately after cleaning, ensure your hands are thoroughly washed to prevent illness to yourself and others.

