



Instructions for Treatment of Scabies Using Permethrin

Scabies is a mite that lives in the top layers of the skin. The body has an allergic reaction to this mite (differentiating it from other mites that live on the body). The mite is contagious and is acquired by physical contact or by fomites (inanimate objects carrying the mite such as clothing or towels harboring dead skin cells).

Permethrin

This is the drug of choice for treating scabies given its safety profile in adults, children, pregnant and lactating women.

The medication is applied overnight and washed off in the morning. In children and elderly apply the medication to the entire body surface (avoiding the eyes). In adults the face and scalp do not need to be treated. Pay special attention to ensure the entire skin surface is treated including the umbilicus (belly button), gluteal cleft and areas around and under the fingernails.

The treatment is repeated in 1 week.

The itching should improve significantly with each application; however, it is normal for itching to persist for several weeks after treatment.

Other interventions

Wash all clothing, linens and towels that have been used in the past week with hot water and a hot dry cycle while the permethrin is applied to the skin. This should be repeated again with the second application 1 week later. If materials cannot be washed in hot water with a hot dry cycle the items can be placed in an air tight bag and left to sit for 10 days.

Close contacts

It is recommended that close contacts be treated for scabies. They should contact their primary physician or dermatologist for treatment. Pets do not harbor the mite and do not need to be treated.