

Scabies - Frequently asked questions (FAQs) for care of the patient/resident/client (P/R/C) in the healthcare environment

Remember: Failure to complete treatment properly can result in a prolonged infestation and transmission risk!

Q: Are there special considerations for room cleaning when dealing with scabies?

A: When the P/R/C has been diagnosed with scabies:

- In a WRHA facility wipe all hard non-porous surfaces down with a facility approved disinfectant as you normally would
- Soft furnishing (pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture, care seats etc) should be thoroughly vacuumed
- Care should be taken to ensure any mobility aids (wheelchairs, etc) and transfer devices (slings, transfer belts, etc.) are appropriately cleaned/disinfected according to manufacture recommendations
- For in-patient facilities/Home Care time the environmental cleaning, laundry and transfer device cleaning/disinfection to when the p/r/c/ is in the shower

Q: What should be done with P/R/C clothing, linen and towels?

A: Wear gloves and gowns when handling contaminated linens. Coordinate the cleaning of the environment and linen with the timing of treatment:

- Clothing, linen and towels used 4 days prior to treatment should be washed using hot water and dried using the hot dryer cycle
- Items that cannot be washed should be stored in a closed plastic bag for 1 week.
- The P/R/C should be placed in clean pajamas and have clean linen on the bed after the scabicide treatment has been applied. The client should be placed in clean clothes and clean bed linen on the bed after the scabicide has been washed off.

Q: How long do we have to wear gowns and gloves (contact precautions) when caring for a patient with scabies?

A: It depends on the presentation of the Scabies.

- In a TYPICAL scabies presentation you must wear a gown and gloves (Contact Precautions) until 24 hours after the initiation of appropriate therapy
- In a CRUSTED (Norwegian) scabies presentation you must wear a gown and gloves (Contact Precautions) until the lesions have resolved. However, these cases are best managed on a case to case basis in consultation with IP&C.