

## Further information

Further information about STIs is available on the Soa Aids Nederland (STI AIDS Netherlands) website. Soa Aids Nederland is a centre of expertise for HIV infection and other STIs. The [www.soaaid.nl](http://www.soaaid.nl) website gives detailed information on HIV and other STIs. Young people can visit the Dutch information site [www.sense.info](http://www.sense.info).

# Scabies

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## For answers to your questions on STIs, call the AIDS STI Infoline

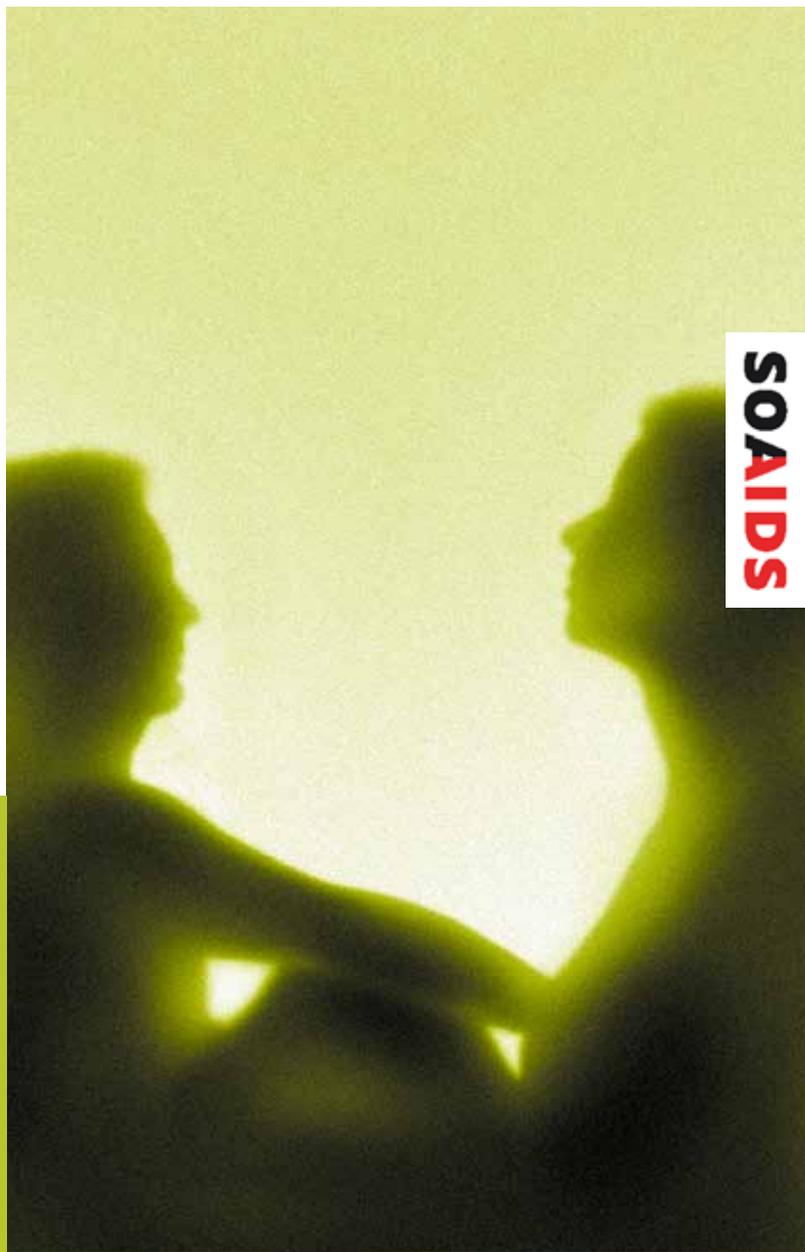
0900-204 204 0 (10 cents per minute)

Mon - Fri 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Thurs and Fri 2 - 8 p.m.

or send an e-mail to: [infolijn@soaaid.nl](mailto:infolijn@soaaid.nl)

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Scabies (also known as “the itch”) is caused by a tiny parasitic mite (measuring less than 0.5 mm) that can only be seen under a microscope. Female mites burrow into the skin and lay eggs in these tunnels. The eggs hatch after three or four days. Scabies causes intense itching. The mite is usually passed from one person to another by close body contact, during sex for example. But you can also catch scabies by lying in a bed soon after someone with scabies has been there, or by wearing that person’s clothes. Fifteen minutes of skin contact is necessary to pass on the mite, so you won’t catch it from shaking hands. Scabies is easy to treat with an insecticide that will get rid of the mites. This is available on doctor’s prescription at pharmacies.

## Symptoms

One of the main symptoms of scabies is intense itching. This can be all over your body and will be worse at night in bed. Scabies can also cause a skin rash with red spots. Sometimes you can see the tunnels the mites have burrowed in the skin. Skin affected by scabies is usually found on the wrists, between the fingers, on the sides and palm of the hands, on the genitals, around the nipples, in the armpits, on the backs of the knees, the insides of the elbows, ankles and feet.

## Possible complications of scabies

If you have scabies, it can be very difficult to stop yourself scratching your skin and this can lead to broken skin and inflammation.

## Treatment

The doctor will prescribe an insecticide cream or tablets to get rid of the mites. After showering, apply the cream to your whole body (except the face), including hands and feet. This has to stay on for 8-12 hours (overnight). Hands mustn’t be washed during that period. Sometimes treatment is repeated a week later to make sure all the skin has been treated. Dead scabies mites can still cause allergic reactions in the skin for some time after treatment. So the itching may continue for several weeks, and it may even get worse immediately after treatment.

To make sure that the scabies doesn’t recur, all clothing, bedding and towels that were used up until three days before treatment need to be washed at 60°C or higher. Textiles that cannot be washed will need to be aired or kept in a sealed plastic bag for at least three days. It is important that partners and anyone else who lives with you are treated at the same time, even if they don’t have any symptoms.

If you have caught scabies from sexual contact, it is advisable to consult your doctor about further testing for other STIs.