What is scabies?
Scabies is a skin infestation caused by a mite called Sarcoptes scabiei.

The mite is less than a millimetre long, and burrows into the top layer of the skin where it lives and lays eggs.

Scabies is spread via direct, prolonged skin-to-skin contact with a person who is already infested with scabies.

The scabies mite can be spread from an infected person until they are treated.

Anyone can get scabies, regardless of age, gender, or standards of personal hygiene.

Symptoms of scabies may take 4-6 weeks to develop. If a person has had scabies before, symptoms may develop within one to four days. During this time, the affected person may spread scabies.

The elderly and those with weakened immune systems are at risk of developing a more severe form of scabies.

The scabies mite from an infected person can live on clothes, bed linen or other personal items for a period of two to three days.

What are the symptoms of scabies?
Some of the symptoms of scabies include:

- Intense itching especially at night (this is a local allergic reaction to the mites and their faeces)
- Skin rash, pimple like irritations and small greyish lines
- Itching or burrows seen in the webbing between the fingers, or around skin folds, wrist, elbow, knees, penis & breasts
- Sores on the body from scratching.

How is scabies diagnosed?
Scabies is often diagnosed after examination of the skin. Your health care professional may obtain scrapings of the infested skin. This is done by lightly scraping the surface of the skin with a blade. These skin scrapings are then looked at under the microscope to identify if the mite is present.
Scabies
Infection Prevention

Contact information
Ph: 03 9076 3139
Infection Prevention
– The Alfred
55 Commercial Road,
Melbourne VIC 3004
Tel: (03) 9076 2000
alfredhealth.org.au

Any questions?
If you would like further information about Scabies, please contact Alfred Health Infection Prevention on (03) 9076 3139.

Further information:
Better Health Channel
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Health Victoria

How is scabies treated?
Treatment involves applying a medicated cream to your skin ensuring that the product instructions are followed. Your health care professional will assist you with this.

You are considered infectious until 24hrs after commencement of treatment.

 Clothes worn over the last three days, bed linen and towels should be laundered in a hot wash or bagged for 3 days.

How will I be cared for in hospital?

Isolation: You will be cared for in a single room until 24 hours after the start of appropriate treatment for scabies. Health care workers may wear a gown and gloves when entering your room and during your care. This is to reduce the risk of contracting scabies themselves and preventing transmission to other patients that they are caring for.

Hand hygiene: It is very important that staff, patients and visitors clean their hands every time they enter or leave a room or cubicle. To clean hands, alcohol based hand rub or soap and water may be used.

It’s OK to ask: Please feel free to remind your health care worker about cleaning their hands before and after touching you or your surrounds.

What do my visitors need to do?

Any visitors with symptoms of scabies or who have been confirmed with scabies should stay at home for 24 hours after starting the appropriate treatment.

Whilst in hospital, your visitors may need to wear gloves and a gown if they are providing nursing care for you

Your visitors will be shown how to apply and remove personal protective equipment by a health care professional.