ADVANCED DERMATOLOGY
of the Midlands

Scabies

What is it?

Scabies is a common infection with a microscopic spider-like organism known as the scabies mite. The infection generally results in moderate to severe itching in those affected. On the skin, scaling and little red dots are most often seen. Sometimes, larger welts may develop on the skin, similar to mosquito bites. The severity of symptoms often varies from person to person.

Where did it come from?

Most of the time, scabies mites move from one person to another by skin-to-skin contact. In other words, they are contagious. Infected individuals acquired the mites from someone and may infect other individuals if they are in close physical contact with them, especially if this contact occurs repeatedly. Rarely, the mites may be transmitted by contaminated bed linens.

How can it be treated?

The good news is that this nuisance is generally very easy to treat. The most commonly prescribed medication is Permethrin 5% cream. If used correctly, this medication is 100% effective in the vast majority of cases. This cream is generally applied to all skin surfaces from the neck down (including the belly button, between the fingers/toes, and the external genitalia). The cream is left on overnight and washed off approximately 8 hours later in the morning with a bath or shower. One week later, a second application in the exact same manner should be performed. All your bed linens should be laundered in hot water after each of the two treatments. If you have a comforter or blanket, put that in a plastic bag for 2 weeks before re-using it to save the trouble of cleaning it (with this measure any mites on it should die). Keep in mind that other people who are or have been your close contacts may also need to be evaluated and treated.