



The healthy skin book

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

Acknowledgement

A photograph of a person in traditional Indigenous Australian attire. They are wearing a red wrap around their waist and have intricate white and black body paint on their legs. They are holding a metal bucket with a branch and leaves inside. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a blue sky and some greenery.

Queensland Health respectfully acknowledges the Traditional and Cultural Custodians of the lands, waters and seas across Queensland. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, while recognising the role of current and future leaders in shaping a better health system.

Queensland Health acknowledges the First Nations peoples in Queensland are both Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and supports the cultural knowledge, determination and commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in caring for their health and wellbeing.



The purpose of this handbook

This book explains common skin conditions in Queensland.

It is a resource for communities. It can be printed in healthcare settings and provided to community or used as a large format education resource by health professionals when explaining skin conditions, when to seek care and why skin is important.

To adapt the resource for your own community please contact the Queensland Health Strategic Communications Branch: strategiccommunications@health.qld.gov.au or engagement@health.qld.gov.au.

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Why is skin important?

Skin is your body's largest organ, acting as a shield and barrier against germs.

When your skin is healthy it protects your body.

Having healthy skin helps you to stay well, feel good and do well at school and sport.



How do germs make your skin sick?

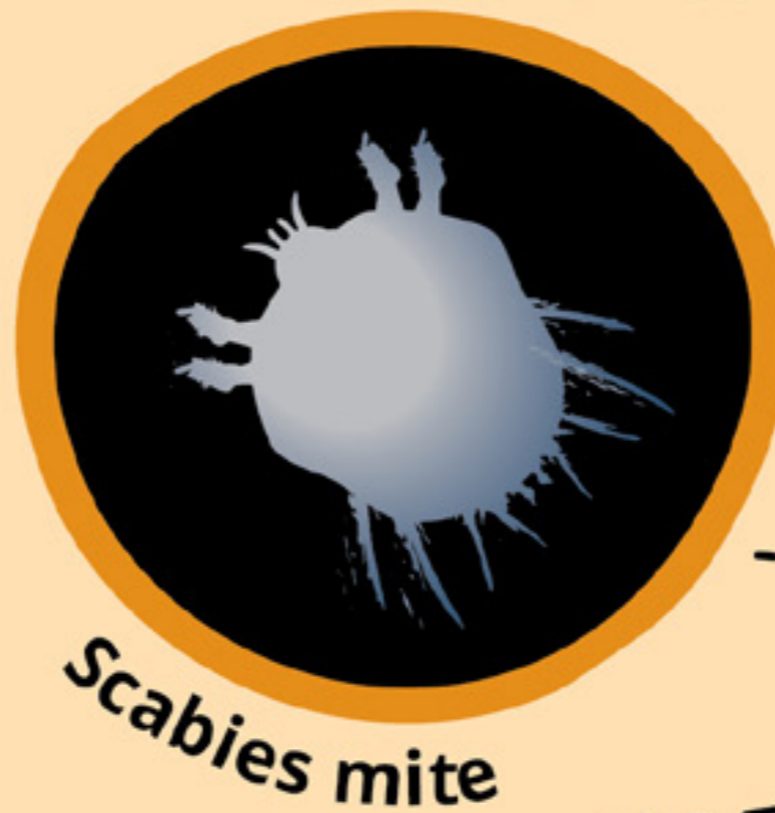
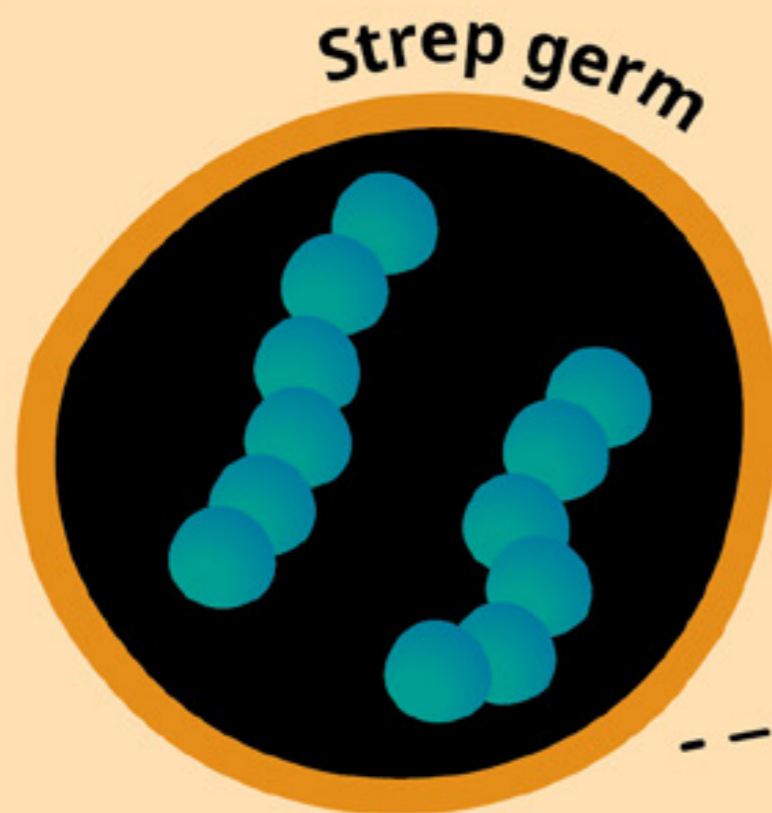
Cuts and bites can damage the skin barrier. Germs can then get into your body, causing infections.

Infections can cause further damage inside the body, leading to a sick heart or kidneys.

If your skin is sick, the rest of your body can get sick too.



Things that can make your skin sick





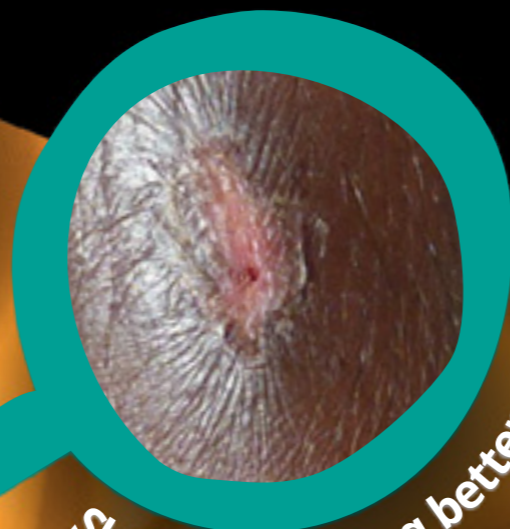
**Common
skin
problems...**

Skin sores

Skin sores happen when strep or staph germs enter the skin through cuts, bites or skin-to-skin contact with sores.



Skin sore with pus



Skin sore getting better

Acacias, Gangalidda and Waanyi Country, Doomadgee

Signs



Yellow-brown scabbed sores



Sores with pus

If you think you or your family have skin sores, go to the doctor or clinic.



When skin sores have a scab or pus, you need **medicine** to kill the germs.



Cover the sore with a **band-aid**. When skin sores are getting better, they look flat and dry.



Treat skin sores with medicine **straight away**.



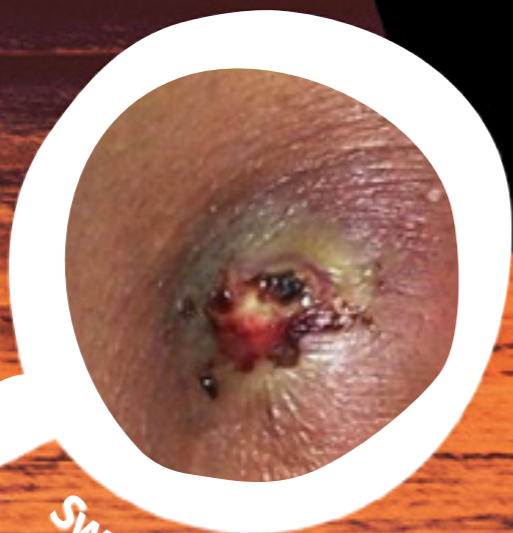
Take all your medicine, even if the sore starts to look better.



Skin sores can be **spread** by close contact. Avoid sharing towels, clothes or bedding while you have a sore.

Boils

Boils can happen when the staph germ gets into a hair root or sweat pore. Sometimes the strep germ can get in too.



Swollen boil

Signs

Painful areas that could be on the face, neck, armpits, shoulders or bum



Red, swollen lumps



Sometimes a fever

If you think you or your family have boils, go to the doctor or clinic.



Boils need **medicine**, which is sometimes antibiotic tablets that you will need to take until they are finished.



Try to not touch or squeeze the boil, wash your hands with soap often and keep the boil covered with band-aids.



Avoid sharing your towel or clothes with others when you have a boil.

Scabies

Scabies is caused by tiny mites that dig into the skin to lay eggs. It spreads through skin-to-skin contact or sharing clothing, towels, or bedding.



Scabies skin infection

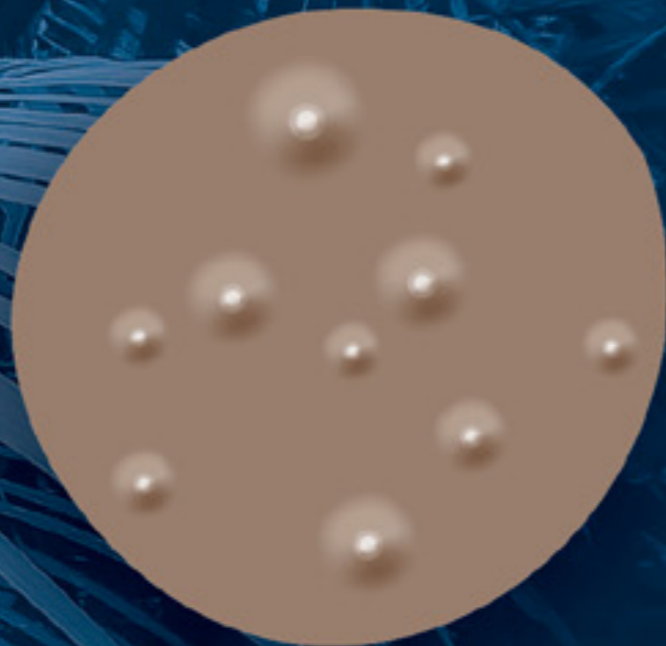
Signs



Itchy skin,
sometimes
worse at
night



A rash between
fingers and toes,
on wrists, elbows,
knees, ankles
and bottom



In children,
pimple-like
bumps on the
hands and feet
and sometimes
the whole
body

**If you think you
or your family
have **scabies**, go
to the doctor or
clinic.**



You might need to use a cream and take tablets. Everyone in the house should be treated at the same time. When you get the cream, apply it straight away and again after one week.

***** See *How to use scabies cream* on pages 26 -27



Wash all the clothes, towels and bedding in the house in hot water.



You can **dry** your clothes and bedding in the sun or use the 'hot' setting on a clothes dryer to kill scabies.



Vacuum floors, couches, child car seats, prams, and any furniture.

Infected scabies

Scabies sores can become infected with germs like strep or staph.



Infected scabies

Signs



Sores

Pus

Swelling

If you think you or your family have infected scabies, go to the doctor or clinic.



You might need to use a **cream** and take **antibiotics** for infection.

***** See *How to use scabies cream* on pages 26 -27



Even if you start to feel better, make sure you finish taking and using **all** the medicine.



Cover sores with band-aids or dressings to stop germs spreading.



Do not share clothes, bedding, or towels if someone has infected scabies.



Infections can make you **feel unwell** and can lead to serious sickness if not treated.

Crusted scabies

A severe scabies infection that spreads very easily from person to person. It is rare and more often seen in older people or those that have health concerns.



Crusted scabies

Daintree River, Kuku Yalanji Country, Far North Queensland

Signs



Skin forms thickened patches and crust

Often not itchy

Usually on hands and feet,
and sometimes other areas.

If you think you or your family have crusted scabies, go to the doctor or clinic.



People with crusted scabies are often treated in hospital.



If you have crusted scabies you will need to clean your **home** to stop it spreading.



Wash all the clothes, towels and bedding in the house in hot water.



Put mattresses in the **sun** to kill scabies and flip them over to sun both sides.

Ringworm or tinea

Ringworm or tinea is a common fungal infection of the skin or scalp. It spreads through skin contact or through shared bedding, clothing, or towels.



Ringworm / tinea

Wadja and Gungaloo Country, between Biloela and Woorabinda

Signs



Itchy areas of skin



Scaly, ring-shaped patches on the skin

If you think you or your family have ringworm or tinea, go to the doctor or clinic.



You might be given an antifungal **cream** or **tablet**.



Even if you've had ringworm or tinea for a long time, see a doctor for treatment as the infection can be **cured**.



Keep skin **clean and dry**. Change socks and underwear every day.



Don't share hats, combs or brushes if someone has an infection on their scalp.

Hand, foot and mouth disease

This disease is common in children. It shows up as sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet.



Hand, foot and mouth sores

Signs



Painful sores in the mouth



Fever



Rash on hands, feet, and sometimes bum



If you think you or your family have **hand, foot and mouth disease**, go to the doctor or clinic.



There's no special medicine for this disease but it can be managed with **pain relief** and drinking enough **water**.



Make sure you **wash** your hands and don't share towels or bedding if you think you have hand, foot and mouth disease.



Go back to the **clinic** if your child is not drinking enough or has signs of dehydration like dry lips, less wee, or being very tired.

Head lice

Head lice are common in children. They crawl quickly and spread when kids play or adults hug. The itch can cause poor sleep and scratching may break skin, leading to sores and infection.



Signs



Itchy,
irritated head



Cream
or brown
lice on
the scalp



Small
yellow-white
eggs on hair
close to the
scalp



Sores on head

If you or your family have infected sores from head lice that are not healing, go to the doctor or clinic.



Use a product with Dimeticone and neroldol. Rub it in clean, dry hair, then **wash it out** and comb out dead lice. You can also comb wet hair with conditioner. Repeat daily until no lice are found.



Check other household members for lice.



Wash pillowcases, bed sheets and hairbrushes/combs in soap and hot water.



Avoid sharing combs, brushes or hats.

Keeping your family's skin healthy



Five generations, Gungaloo Country, Blackwater



Use soap

Use soap and water when washing your body to remove dirt and germs.



Hand washing

Wash hands with soap when using the toilet, changing nappies, and before eating or making food.



Clean clothing and bedding

Wash towels, clothes, and bedding often and dry them in the sun to kill germs.



Moisturise

Use moisturising cream often to keep skin strong and stop it from cracking.



Don't share towels

Try not to share towels, bedding or clothing to prevent the spread of germs.



Good tucker

Eat healthy foods from Country or from the shop.



Bush medicine

Use bush medicines from Country but if the problem isn't getting better, visit the clinic.









Pet hygiene

If you keep pets inside, make sure they are clean and free from skin problems. Make sure all pets get regular tick, flea, worm treatment and de-sexing services.

How to use scabies cream

Cover your whole body head to toe ...

-  **When you get the cream,** apply it straight away.
-  **Rub cream on after a shower** but make sure your skin is completely dry first.
-  **Rub cream on hands last** so you can focus on getting the cream under your nails.
-  **Do not wash the cream off your hands** and body until the morning. The cream needs to be on for 8 hours.
-  **If you go to the toilet and wash your hands,** put the cream on your hands again.
-  **Apply the cream again in 7 days.**

**AROUND
YOUR BITS
AND BUM**

**EVEN IN
YOUR BELLY
BUTTON**



ON YOUR SCALP

BETWEEN YOUR TOES

THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FEET

UNDER YOUR TOENAILS

BEHIND YOUR EARS

UNDER YOUR NAILS

BETWEEN YOUR FINGERS

!
Be careful not to get cream in the eyes, on lips or in your mouth.

If you have skin problems, go to the clinic

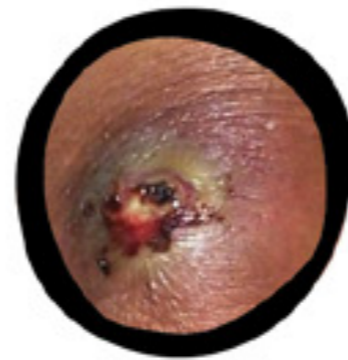
Treating the problem early can prevent it getting worse or spreading to your mob and community.



Skin sore with pus



Skin sore getting better



Boil



Scabies skin infection



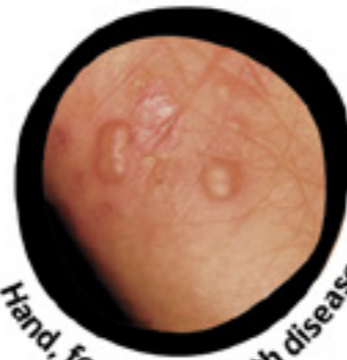
Infected scabies



Crusted scabies



Ringworm / tinea



Hand, foot and mouth disease



Head lice

!
Go to the doctor or clinic now if you have recently had a **skin problem** or a **sore throat** and have these signs:



Short of breath



Have a fever



Not hungry



Chest pain



Feel confused



Sore joints

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Helping kids get back to school and daycare safely

Some skin conditions spread easily. Informing the school or daycare they may have an outbreak and staying home for a short time helps keep everyone healthy.



Skin sores: Your child can return after 1 full day of antibiotics. Cover sores with a band-aid and encourage regular hand washing.



Scabies: Your child can return 1 day after treatment has started.



Ringworm or tinea: Your child can return 1 day after antifungal treatment has started.



Hand, foot and mouth disease: Your child can return once all blisters have dried out.



Head lice: Your child can return once treatment has started.



With thanks

With thanks to the Queensland healthy skin working group, the Queensland Health Rheumatic Heart Disease Program team, Townsville Hospital and Health Service Public Health Unit and clinicians and communities across Queensland for the generous contribution of their expertise and time.

This handbook is adapted from resources developed by The Kids Research Institute Australia (previously The Telethon Kids Institute), including Keeping Skin Healthy: A Handbook for Community Care Workers and the Strong Skin Story booklet.

