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## How scratching brings relief

**CHICAGO:** Scratching an itchy spot turns off an itch "switch" in the spinal cord, United States researchers said on Monday in a finding they think could lead to better treatments for itching disorders.

Tests on monkeys showed that scratching short-circuits itch signals to the brain.

Understanding how this works

may lead to new treatments for people with AIDS or Hodgkin's disease that cause itching not easily relieved by antihistamines or steroid creams.

"There are more than 50 diseases that produce itch that can't be easily treated," Glenn Giesler Jr of the University of Minnesota, whose study appears in *Nature Neuroscience*, said.—Reuters