



# Pubic Lice (crabs)

## What are Pubic Lice?

Pubic lice, are tiny crab-like creatures that live in the hair around the genitals. They do not live in the hair on your head or body. When the lice bite they cause itchiness.

## How do you get Pubic Lice?

Usually you get pubic lice by having close body contact – such as sex - with someone who already has them. It is also possible to get them by sharing towels, clothes or someone's bed. Condoms do not prevent the transmission of pubic lice.

## What are the symptoms?

You will have an intense itchiness in your pubic area and when you look closely you will see what looks like small freckles on the skin. If you look really closely you will see the lice which have 6 legs and move very slowly. You might also notice tiny, shiny eggs (nits) sticking to the pubic hair.

## What is the treatment?

There are several public lice shampoos and creams available at the chemist which will kill the lice. Some of these shampoos and creams are not suitable for pregnant women or babies. You will also need to change and wash any clothing, sheets and towels, which have been in direct contact with your body. If after a week of having treated yourself the itchiness is still there you should visit Clinic 34 or a doctor. The itching could be due to an allergic reaction, a persistent infection, or re-infection.

## What about partners?

People who have had close body contact with a person who has crabs should also be treated. A person who has got pubic lice through sexual contact should consider having a check up for other sexually transmitted infections.

Further fact sheets available at <http://www.nt.gov.au/health/cdc/cdc.shtml>

For more information contact Clinic 34 in your area.

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