

Pubic Lice (Pediculosis Pubis, "Crabs")

Essential facts

Crab lice are small, light brown, flat insects that cling to the pubic hairs, suck blood for nourishment, and fix their eggs (nits) to the pubic hairs. The blood sucking may cause little red sores and itching. Crab lice are almost always spread by close physical contact. They prefer pubic hair and do not voluntarily leave the body.

Transmission

The disease is transmitted mainly by close body contact (including sexual activity).

Treatment of Crabs

Bathe thoroughly and towel dry.

Apply recommended medications over the entire skin area from chest to knees. The liquid should be applied to clean but cool and dry skin.

Leave on for 20 minutes only. Bathe and dry.

Comb pubic hair with a fine tooth comb to remove any eggs.

Wash all clothing, bedding and towels used in the past two days. Dry cleaning can also be used.

The itch may persist for a few days after successful treatment.

Repeat the treatment in 7 to 10 days.

Sexual partners also require treatment.