

Pubic Lice

Cause

Pubic Lice is caused by *Phthirus pubis* (the crab louse).

Symptoms

Symptoms include itchiness in the pubic hair and/or visible eggs or lice.

How do I know if I have it?

Diagnosis is usually made by observation. If you develop itching in the pubic area and are unsure if you have lice, see a doctor.

How is it transmitted?

In most cases pubic lice are transmitted through sexual activity where pubic hair or other hair touches. Lice can also be spread through sharing towels, sheets or clothing, though this is less common as they do not live outside the body for very long.

Treatment/Management

Lotions to treat pubic lice are available over the counter at most pharmacies.

All clothes, towels and sheets should be washed in hot water at the time of treatment.

All sexual partners also need to be treated.

Prevention

Unfortunately condoms do not protect against pubic lice.

Practising safe sex reduces the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

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For further information on sexual health visit the family planning website:
<http://www.fpwa-health.org.au>

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