

Pubic Lice

Cause

Pubic lice are small spider-like bugs. Their medical name is *Phthirus pubis* (the crab louse).

Symptoms

Symptoms include itchiness in the pubic hair and/or visible eggs or lice. Itchiness is caused by the bites of the lice as they suck blood, and often sores develop. Lice can also be found in other areas of coarse body hair.

How do I know if I have it?

Diagnosis is usually made by observation. If you develop persistent 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 without direct body contact for very long. Lice thrive in warm, moist conditions.

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, even if they have no visible signs of having lice.

Prevention

Unfortunately condoms do not protect against pubic lice.

Shaving the pubic hair is not always effective as lice can live in other areas of body hair.

For more information about pubic lice call the **Sexual Health Helpline** on 9227 6178 or 1800 198 205 (country callers) or email sexhelp@fpwa.org.au

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



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www.fpwa.org.au

info@fpwa.org.au

Sexual Health Helpline (08) 92276178 or 1800 198 205 (Country Callers)

sexhelp@fpwa.org.au

Quarry Health Centre for under 25s

7 Quarry Street, PO Box 378, Fremantle, WA, 6959

ph: (08) 9430 4544 fax: (08) 9430 4544

quarry@fpwa.org.au