

PUBIC LICE

What are pubic lice?

Pubic lice (a slang term is “crabs”) are small insects about 1/10 of an inch long. They are transmitted by close physical contact or from bedding or towels. While found most frequently in the genital hair, they may also be found in other hairy areas such as the armpit or eyelashes. For unknown reasons, this particular louse does not like to live on scalp hair. However a different type of lice does infest the scalp.

Treatment

Shampoos: Kwell shampoo (prescription required) or RID, A-200, Pronto, and R&C shampoos (prescriptions not required) are applied to dry pubic hair. Work thoroughly into the hair and remain for about five minutes. Add small quantities of water until a good lather forms. Then rinse thoroughly and towel dry. Nits should be removed using a nit comb or tweezers. Repeat the shampoo in ten days.

Lotion: Kwell lotion (prescription required) is applied in sufficient quantity only to thinly cover the hair and skin of the pubic area. Rub into the skin and hair, leave in place for 8-12 hours, and then wash off. Nits (eggs) should be removed using tweezers or a nit (fine-toothed) comb. Repeat the lotion treatment in ten days.

Hairy individuals: Apply the lotion or shampoo to the hairy areas of the thighs, trunk, and armpits.

Eyelashes: If they are involved. Petrolatum (Vaseline jelly) is applied thickly twice per day for one week followed by mechanical removal of nits with tweezers.

Clothing, sheets, and towels should be washed and dried by machine (hot cycle), by dry cleaning, or by applying dry heat at 140 degrees F for 20 minutes.

Others with close contact should be treated as well. This includes those who have shared bedding, clothing, towels, as well as those with direct physical contact.