

INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE

PUBIC LICE

Pubic Lice (aka Crabs) are small parasites that live in coarse hair, such as Pubic Hair. However, the name is slightly misleading as these parasites can live almost anywhere on the body, apart from hair on the scalp.

How are Pubic Lice caught?

Pubic Lice rely on human blood to survive so will usually only move between people during close sexual contact. Whilst it is rare, there is a possibility of catching lice through bedding, clothes or towels used by someone who has Lice.

Will I know if I have them?

It may take a few weeks for any symptoms to become apparent, however one of the more common symptoms is itching, caused by an allergic reaction to their saliva, and this is more noticeable at night when lice are more active. Other symptoms include black powder in underwear, and blue spots (or spots of blood) on the skin caused by lice bites.

Will it cause any long term effects?

Having Pubic Lice will not cause any long term health effects, although symptoms may well be unpleasant during an infection. Also itching may also continue for up to 6 weeks after treatment.

<http://sexualhealth.cht.nhs/think-sexual-health>



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Will the Pubic Lice come back after treatment?

No. Once Lice and eggs are treated they will not reoccur although this would not prevent someone becoming re-infected with different lice.

How can I best protect myself against Pubic Lice?

Condoms and other forms of contraception will not unfortunately protect you from Pubic Lice so they are difficult to protect against. Simply avoiding contact with someone infected with Pubic lice is the best protection.

What are the treatments for Pubic Lice?

The good news is this infection is very treatable and can be self-treated although if someone is concerned they may have become exposed to other STI's then attending a clinic or accessing services such as the Chlamydia screening programme are advisable.

Treatments which can be undertaken at home include insecticide cream, lotion or shampoo to kill the lice and eggs. This would usually require repeating after 7 days to ensure all Lice and eggs have been killed. It is also highly recommended that your sexual partner(s) are also treated even if they have no symptoms, to prevent re-infection.

It is also advisable to wash any bedding and clothing at 50c or higher to ensure any eggs/ lice are also killed.

Where can I go to be treated for Pubic Lice?

If you are concerned about another STI, or lice are in eyelashes then call us at the sexual health Service, otherwise your GP or Pharmacist can advise on treatments available.

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Sexual Health Calderdale and Huddersfield is part of the Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

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