Pubic Lice (Crabs)

Lice are tiny gray-white bugs that live on hairy parts of the human body. Their eggs (called “nits”) are attached to the hair, and hatch more lice. Pubic lice (“crabs”) live in pubic hair. They can cause only slight discomfort or intense itching. Pubic lice are usually passed from person to person through sexual contact. They can also be transferred by contaminated towels, clothing, and bed sheets.

**How to get rid of pubic lice:**

1. Take a warm, soapy bath or shower. Rinse and towel dry.
2. Apply the prescribed shampoo or cream rinse to the affected area(s). Leave it on for the prescribed amount of time. Then rinse well.
3. Clothing and linens should be disinfected by washing them in hot water and drying in a hot dryer. You may also dry clean clothes, if indicated.
4. Vacuum carpets and cloth-covered furniture, if necessary.
5. Shaving pubic hair is **not** recommended.
6. Re-treatment may be needed 7-10 days later.

**All** sexual contacts should be treated. A follow-up appointment is needed if your symptoms continue. You may need to be treated again. Pregnant or nursing women should not use certain treatment products. Be sure to tell your health care provider if you think you are pregnant or are breastfeeding.

The same type of lice that live in pubic hair can also live on eyelashes. Use petroleum ointment/jelly, such as Vaseline®, to coat the eyelashes. This will suffocate the lice and they will die. Do not use medication on the eyelashes. It can harm your eyes.

**Call your health care provider or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if:**

- The lice do not go away after one treatment.
- Other symptoms appear.
- You have questions or concerns.