



# Pubic Lice



**P**ubic lice are tiny insects that live on humans in the pubic area and occasionally on body hair on the trunk or in the armpit. Sometimes they may even inhabit the eyelashes. Pubic lice grasp the hair firmly with pincers, periodically bite the skin for food, and attach eggs (nits) to the hairs. The organisms are tiny, gray, flat, and slow moving.

## **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

Symptoms include itching, which can vary from mild to intense and is often particularly severe at night. Louse bites may lead to the development of mild fever, muscle aches, and local irritation.

## **WHAT SITES DO PUBIC LICE INFEST?**

The pubic area is the most common site of infestation. The organisms are passed between humans who sleep together. Less frequently, the organisms fall off the host and may survive in bed linen or clothing for up to four days. Infestations can possibly occur from these sources, but this is rare. Other possible sites of infestation include tanning beds and saunas.

## **WHAT TREATMENT SHOULD I FOLLOW?**

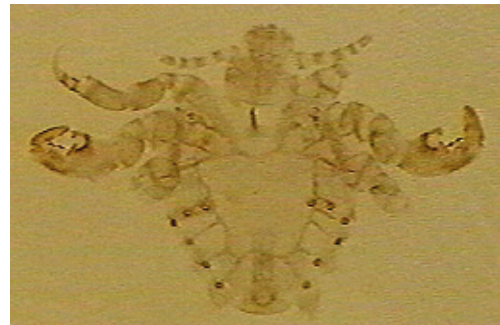
Use the shampoo or lotion as prescribed by your practitioner. Follow the instructions for your product carefully in order to prevent reinfestation. Usually the area from waist to knees is treated. One treatment kills the organisms and the eggs, but itching from bites may last for a few more days. You may be prescribed an antihistamine for the itching.

After treatment, dress in clean clothes and put fresh linen on your bed. You should wash previously worn clothing and used bed linens in HOT water for 30 minutes, or have them dry cleaned. If this is not possible, air clothing outdoors for seven days or leave it in sealed plastic bags for one month. Use a lice control spray on mattresses, pillows, carpets, upholstered furniture, etc. You can purchase this spray at any drug store. Vacuum carefully. Sexual partners, roommates, and housemates should be simultaneously treated.

Retreat in 7-10 days if lice are still found.

## **WHAT ABOUT EYELASH INFESTATION?**

If the eyelashes are infested, then your practitioner will prescribe an ointment that should be thinly applied with a cotton swab twice daily. Your medical provider may remove the organisms from the lashes with fine tweezers. Do not attempt to do this yourself, as absolute stillness, good light, and magnification are needed.



**CONTACT HEALTH SERVICES IF YOU HAVE ANY  
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.**

