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TORONTO

**YOUR
HEALTH.
YOUR
CHOICE.**

Infestations

Pubic Lice and Scabies

Talk to your partner(s) about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and your health before you have sex. You can pass on an STI without knowing you have one. During sex, you can use latex condoms to lower your chances of getting STIs.

What are pubic lice and scabies?

Pubic lice are known as “crabs”. They are usually found around the genitals in pubic hair. Lice look like tiny crabs. They are grey or brownish red. Lice live by feeding on human blood. They lay their eggs at the base of the hair. Their eggs are called nits. Scabies are caused by mites that push under the skin to lay their eggs. They are usually found between the fingers, around the genitals, on the wrists, buttocks, or under the arms.

How do you get pubic lice and scabies?

You get pubic lice or scabies by closely touching someone who has the infection, or if you share a bed with someone who has the infection. Lice can live for up to two days away from the body. You can get them from infested sheets, towels, and toilet seats.

How can you tell if you have pubic lice and scabies?

If you have pubic lice you may feel itching in the genital area. You may see tiny blood spots on your underwear. You may also see blue spots on the skin of your pubic area or thighs. You might see the pubic lice or eggs.

If you have scabies, you might get a rash on any part of your body, but you will usually find them between fingers and toes.

How do you get tested for pubic lice and scabies?

You can usually tell if you have pubic lice by finding the adult lice or eggs on the hair. If it moves, it is pubic lice. However, scabies are harder to recognize. If you think you may have scabies, you should be checked by a clinician.

It is important to use condoms or a latex barrier with sexual partners to decrease the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.

How are pubic lice and scabies treated?

You can go to the drug store and they will give you something to treat pubic lice and scabies. You can use R&C Shampoo or Kwellada.

Your partner(s), friends, and family may also have lice or scabies.

They may have to be treated too. Infants, women who are pregnant, and women who are breast-feeding should ask for a special treatment.

- ★ Dry clean or machine wash in hot water any of your clothing that has been in contact with pubic lice or scabies.
- ★ Wash all bed linen.
- ★ You can store quilts and blankets for two weeks if you cannot wash them.
- ★ You might want to get a spray at the drugstore to clean everything that has been infested with lice or scabies.

Do you need a follow up test?

The treatment usually works. You may need to try the treatment again after one week. You may still feel the itching after you are cured. Don't use the treatment a third time. If you still feel that you have lice or scabies, talk to a clinician.

If you need further information or would like to book an appointment, call:

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services for youth ages 13 to 29. 416-927-7171. Health Services offers same-day, scheduled and drop-in appointments. For more information visit www.ppt.on.ca.

Women's Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control for women of all ages at 416-351-3700.

Youth can also access information about sexual health by calling the Teen Sex InfoLine at 416-961-3200 or chat live using MSN messenger at spiderbytes@hotmail.com from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. You can also email us a question anytime at askus@spiderbytes.ca or visit www.spiderbytes.ca.