

## How do I avoid catching pubic lice again?

To avoid catching pubic lice again:

- Make sure your sexual partners are treated (avoid sexual contact for 7 days after treatment).
- Wash any items that may be infected, such as bedding and clothing in hot water.



## Contact us

Phone 0800 739 432 Monday to Friday to book your appointment at one of the Auckland Sexual Health Clinics or visit our website [www.ashs.org.nz](http://www.ashs.org.nz) for more information around opening hours

### Locations

**Greenlane Clinical Centre**  
Building 7 Level 3  
Greenlane West

**North Shore**  
418 Glenfield Rd  
Glenfield

**South Auckland**  
652 Great South Road, Manukau  
(Southpoint)

**West Auckland**  
20 Sel Peacock Drive  
Henderson

*This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on disease. It is not intended to replace the need for an appointment with your doctor. People are strongly advised to check with their healthcare provider about any specific questions or concerns. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct*

**Te Whatu Ora**  
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Health New Zealand

Auckland Sexual Health  
Services

**Pubic Lice**

## What are pubic lice (crabs)?

Pubic lice are tiny parasites, which can cause itching in the genital area.

The lice use their claws to grab and hang on to pubic hair while feeding on blood.

## Who can get pubic lice and how is it spread?

Pubic lice are not always a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Pubic lice are common and anyone can get them. Close skin contact with another person who is infected spreads pubic lice.

Pubic Lice can survive for some time away from the body so it is also possible to catch them by sharing clothes or someone else's bed.

## What are the symptoms of pubic lice?

The main symptom of pubic lice is itching in the pubic or groin area. This itching is due to the pubic lice biting your skin.

Often they can be seen moving in the pubic hair.

## Are pubic lice in the pubic hair the same as lice in the hair?

No, pubic lice found in the pubic hair differ from those in the head hair. Pubic lice like thicker strands of hair. Whilst they prefer pubic hair they can occasionally be found in other areas of the body including eyelashes, chest hair and armpit hair.

## What is the treatment?

There are a few different shampoos and ointments you can buy from the pharmacy for pubic lice. Instructions are different for different treatments but most contain a chemical to kill the lice.

Often the treatment needs to be left on overnight, and sometimes needs to be repeated after 10 days to kill any baby lice that survived the first treatment.

Never use lice treatment on you face or near your eyes.

If you can see eggs (sometimes called 'nits') stuck to pubic hair these can be combed out with a lice comb dipped in vinegar. Shaving affected hair is not necessary.

Tell anyone you have been in close contact with for the last 3months so they can also get treatment

Avoid having sex/skin contact with anyone for 7days so you don't get re-infected.