

Crabs (Pubic Lice)



We respect your right to responsible sexuality!

Facts:

- Crabs look like small bugs and are usually found in pubic hair. Crabs lay eggs in the pubic hair that usually hatch within two weeks.
- Crabs are spread by having sex or close physical contact with someone who is infected.
- You can get crabs from sharing clothing, bed linen or towels with someone who is infected. Crabs can live off the body for as long as two days.
- Crabs will not go away without medication.

Symptoms:

- Severe itching in the genitals
- Little black spots, which are the crabs, may be seen on the skin or moving in the hair
- Eggs or nits attached to the pubic hair

Testing:

- Visual Exam

Treatment:

- Kwell (prescription), Nix, Rid or A2000 (over-the-counter) shampoo
- Clothing, bedding and towels should be hot washed and hot dried, dry cleaned or sealed in a bag for 30 days to destroy lice and nits.

If Left Untreated:

- Severe itching
- Infection of the skin can occur as a result of scratching

Prevention/Protection:

- Have all your partners tested and treated. If they are not cured, they can pass it back to you or to others.
- Abstain from having sex with your partner(s). Discover and explore other ways to express your sexual self that don't include vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- Only have sex with a partner who only has sex with you. To reduce the chances of getting an infection when you have more than one partner, use condoms and get tested before having sex with a new partner.
- Limit your number of sex partners - the more partners you have, the higher your risk for getting an infection.
- Condoms (rubbers) do not protect against crabs.
- Alcohol and drugs lower inhibitions (take your guard down.) If you are more likely to make different decisions for yourself when you have been drinking, you may want to drink less.

Kent County Health Department ♦ Personal Health Services ♦ 700 Fuller Ave NE ♦ Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
616/632-7171 ♦ www.accesskent.com/health

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for talking with a health care provider. If you have any questions about crabs or think you may have it, call your health care provider