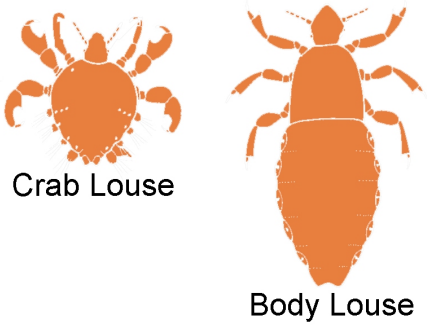
Care of Head and Pubic Lice
(Pediculosis)

Lice are tiny, light brown insects with claws on the ends of their legs. They are small parasites that live on the human body. Lice often make their home in your hair. They hatch from little round eggs (*nits*), which are attached to the base of hairs. They spread by:

- Direct contact with an infested person.
- Infested personal items such as combs, brushes, towels, clothing, pillow cases and sheets.



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The parasite that causes your condition may also live in clothes which have been worn within the week before treatment. Therefore, it is necessary to wash your clothes, bed linens, towels, combs and brushes. Any woolens can be put in an air-tight plastic bag for one week. **You need to use fresh clothes, towels and sheets after your treatment is completed.** Re-treatment is usually not necessary if instructions are followed. If necessary, treatment may be repeated in 7 days. The entire family may require treatment. Sexual partners should be treated if the nits are present in the pubic area.

TREATMENT IS WITH MEDICATED SHAMPOO OR CREAM AS FOLLOWS:

- Apply enough medicated shampoo or cream to wet hair and skin in and around the infected areas.
- Work thoroughly into hair and leave in according to instructions.
- Add a small amount of water until a good lather forms.
- Rinse thoroughly.
- Towel briskly.
- When hair is dry, any remaining nits, cream or shampoo may be removed with a fine-tooth comb or tweezers. The nits resemble dandruff; however they are glued to the hair follicle and are difficult to brush out. Frequent fine combing and shampoos are necessary. A towel soaked in white vinegar and left on the hair for 2 hours will also help soften the glue which holds the nits on the hair.

WARNING: Medicated shampoo or cream should not be used on children or pregnant women without a caregiver's prescription or instructions.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You or your child develops sores that look infected.
- The rash does not go away in one week.
- The lice or nits return or persist in spite of treatment.

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