

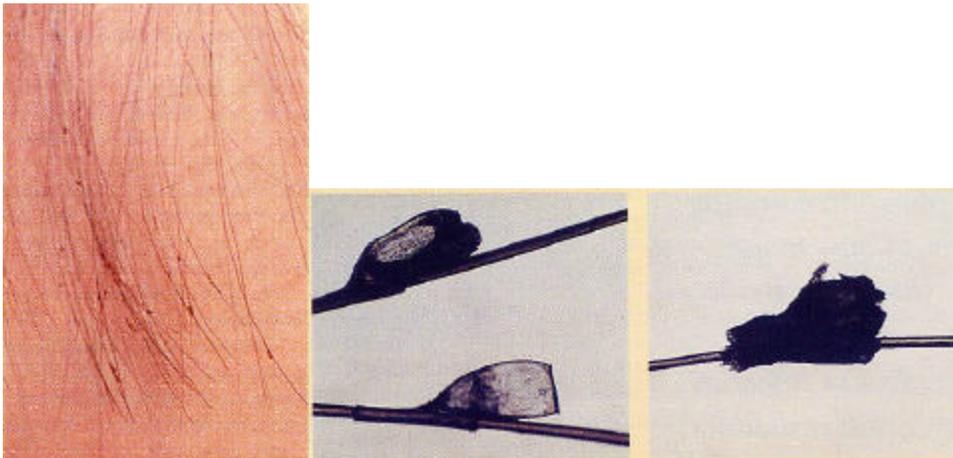
Head Lice

About Lice

Lice are wingless parasites that feed on their host's blood. They are about the size of a sesame seed. They tend to adapt their color to their surroundings – i.e. darker in hosts with a darker skin color. They lay **eggs called Nits** that are very characteristic. They are “glued” all around the hair shaft and are hard to remove unlike flakes of dry skin or hair lotions/sprays that easily slide off of the hair shaft.

Louse Lifecycle: It takes 10 to 12 days for egg incubation and then 9 to 12 days to mature into an adult. It takes less than 2 days for the adult female to become pregnant and produce new nits. The average adult lives for about a month, and produces about 140 nits in that lifespan.

Hair with nits:



How my child got lice

Transmission of lice generally occurs with direct head-to-head contact, possibly with a close friend or sibling. Sharing clothing, and anything used in or on the hair like combs, bows, etc. can transmit the nits to another person. Transmission is more likely to occur in the home than in the school. Lice do not jump or fly, and lice themselves rarely survive off a human host for more than a day.

Symptoms

Many louse infestations are not associated with symptoms but if symptoms do occur, it may be head itching. You may see red, hive-like bumps on the head from bites, and you may see white bumps (nits) attached to the hair shafts. Lice are more active at night so you may be able to see them best then, and your child may actually have trouble sleeping due to their activity.

Treatment

Use of an over-the-counter (OTC) product like **RID/A200** or **NIX** is the first step in treatment. These products work well and have VERY LOW TOXICITY unlike other prescription products that may have serious side effects. Whether using an OTC or prescription product, it is very important to follow any and all instructions that are given, or are included with the product.

After using the product, a metal nit comb should be used to remove dead lice and nits. A “rinse” of 50% vinegar and 50% warm water applied to the hair will help release the nits from the hair shaft before combing. Repeat the treatment with the OTC product eight to 10 days after the first application. Your doctor should re-examine the child's head after another eight to 10 days.

If live lice are still seen, treatment failure may have occurred. If your child lives in an area where resistance seems to be occurring, the doctor may recommend treatment with a prescription product, such as malathion lotion. Your doctor will advise you if you need to use a prescription product.

Other Important Information

Smothering lice with mayonnaise, petrolatum, olive oil, or mineral oil should only be undertaken if recommended by your doctor. These treatments have not been scientifically studied, but they seem to work well in some cases.

DO NOT USE dangerous materials such as kerosene, gasoline, paint thinners, or turpentine to get rid of lice! It is very difficult (and time-consuming) to eliminate an infestation of lice with use of a lice comb alone. The comb should be used along with an OTC or prescription product.

Excessive cleanup in the home—that is, major scrubbing of all surfaces and items in a room—is not necessary, but the child's clothes, towels, and bedding should be washed in hot water (130° F) or dried on high heat. The same can be done for the child's toys or blanket or with items used in the child's hair (combs, brushes, hair clips). pets unless specifically told to do so by your veterinarian. Similarly, do not use an insecticide on furniture, rugs, etc. unless you are well informed on proper use to avoid poisonous side effects. Call a trained exterminator if necessary!

The Troublemaker:

