

LICE

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

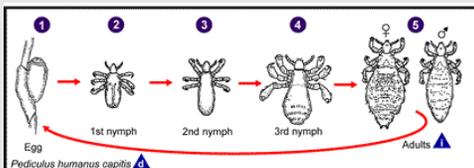


WHAT ARE LICE

Lice are tiny gray bugs that can cause scalp infections. They are about the size of a sesame seed and move quickly so can be difficult to see. What you often do find are their white eggs, called nits, which firmly attach to hair shafts near the skin. Unlike dandruff or sand, nits cannot easily be shaken off the hair shaft. Most people who get lice complain of an itchy scalp. Lice do not carry diseases and will not make you feel sick.

LICE LIFE CYCLE

Nits hatch into lice in about one week. They can survive off the scalp during that time which makes cleaning your house imperative when treating a lice infection in the family. Adult lice can live three weeks on the scalp and feed every few hours on tiny amounts of blood from the scalp. Off the scalp, adult lice cannot survive for more than one day without a blood meal.



TRANSMISSION

Nits cannot pass from person to person; only live lice can infect other people. Almost all transmission is from direct head-to-head contact. Since lice cannot jump or fly, it takes about 30 minutes of direct contact for a louse to crawl from one head to another. However, indirect transmission from hats, hairbrushes, headphones and other objects is possible though less common. Most transmission of lice happens at home, through sleepovers and bed sharing.

TREATMENT

- Anti-lice shampoo (such as Nix) is the mainstay of treatment. Be sure to follow package directions.
- First, wash hair with a regular shampoo and towel dry. Do not use conditioner on the hair as it interferes with the lice treatment.
- Pour 2 ounces (one box) of Nix into damp hair; people with long hair may need to use two boxes. Work the cream into all the hair down to the roots and add a little warm water if needed to work up a lather.
- Leave the shampoo on for a full 10 minutes and then rinse hair thoroughly with water and towel dry. Do not use conditioner.
- Most importantly, repeat the anti-lice shampoo in 9 days to kill any nits that survived. Since nits hatch 6-9 days after being laid, the second treatment will ensure that lice that hatch from surviving nits are also killed.
- Prescription anti-lice shampoo is available and requires only one application. Discuss with your doctor if this is a good choice for your family.
- Do not shampoo hair for 48 hours after application of anti-lice shampoo and avoid hair conditioner before treatment and for 2 weeks after.

PREVENTING SPREAD

- Vacuum your child's room thoroughly as well as the rest of the house.
- Soak hairbrushes for 1 hour in a solution containing anti-lice shampoo.
- Wash bed sheets, blankets, pillowcases and any clothes worn in the past 3 days in hot water. Water temperature of 130 degrees Fahrenheit kills lice and nits.
- For items that cannot be easily washed, such as hats or stuffed animals, place them in sealed plastic bags for 2 weeks which is the longest amount of time nits can survive off someone's hair.
- Remind family members not to share combs or hairbrushes.

MOST IMPORTANTLY

- Don't stress! Lice infection does not happen because of a lack of cleanliness - it just happens. If you follow the above steps, lice and their nits should be successfully killed.
- Children can return to school and daycare after treatment with an anti-lice shampoo. A child does not need to miss any school or childcare due to nits remaining after treatment since nits are not contagious.
- Always contact your doctor if you are unsure if your family has lice, are unable to successfully treat them with the above steps, or have additional questions.