

Pediculosis (Head lice)



Pediculosis is the presence of lice on the scalp. It is common in school-age children and is mainly transmitted through direct hair-to-hair contact or by sharing personal items such as combs or hats. Although it does not cause serious illness, it can lead to itching and discomfort, and it should be treated to prevent its spread.

What are lice?

Head lice are very small insects that live on the scalp and feed on tiny amounts of blood. They lay their eggs, called nits, close to the base of the hair shaft.

Important characteristics:

They do not fly or jump.

They move by crawling quickly.

Nits adhere firmly to the hair.

What are the symptoms of head lice?

Symptoms may appear several weeks after the infestation begins.

Some common signs include:

- Intense itching of the scalp.
- A tingling or crawling sensation in the hair.
- Irritation or redness on the scalp.
- The presence of nits (small white or yellowish dots attached to the hair).
- Difficulty sleeping due to itching.



How are lice transmitted?

Head lice are mainly spread through direct contact. The most common forms of transmission include:

- Head-to-head contact.
- Sharing combs or brushes.
- Sharing hats, caps, or hair accessories.
- Sharing pillows or towels.



Interesting facts:

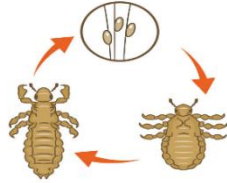
- Head lice can live for about 30 days on a person's head.
- It takes about 7 to 10 days for the nits to hatch (the process in which the egg opens).
- Head lice cannot survive more than 1 or 2 days off the scalp.
- Having lice does not mean that a person is dirty or has poor hygiene.

The Life Cycle of the Lice

A louse lives for approximately 28 days and goes through three phases:

1. **Egg or nit:** Eggs take about 7 to 12 days to hatch. They are located 4–6 mm from the scalp and do not survive if they are farther away.

2. **Nymph:** A young louse that resembles the adult but is smaller (about 1.5 mm, roughly the size of a pinhead). It becomes an adult between 9 and 12 days after hatching.
3. **Adult louse:** The adult louse reproduces quickly and can lay up to 10 eggs per day.



Have a plan to treat head lice

- Use special lice-treatment products and follow the instructions carefully.
- Check the hair of all household members.
- Use a fine-toothed comb to remove lice and nits.
- Repeat the treatment as directed, usually 7 to 10 days later.
- Do not share personal items such as brushes or combs.
- Pediculosis (Head Lice): What Parents Need to Know – HealthyChildren.org.



Recommendations

- Check children's hair regularly, especially during the school year.
- Keep long hair tied up when children are at school.
- Teach children not to share personal items.
- Disinfect combs and brushes by washing them in hot water.
- If the infestation persists, consult a healthcare professional.



Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your treatment, please visit your primary care physician or call the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health

787-641-9133

References:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/Spanish/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Paginas/signs-of-lice.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/dpdx/pediculosis/index.html>

Prepared by Licensed Health Educators.

Created in March 2026.

©First Medical Health Plan, Inc.