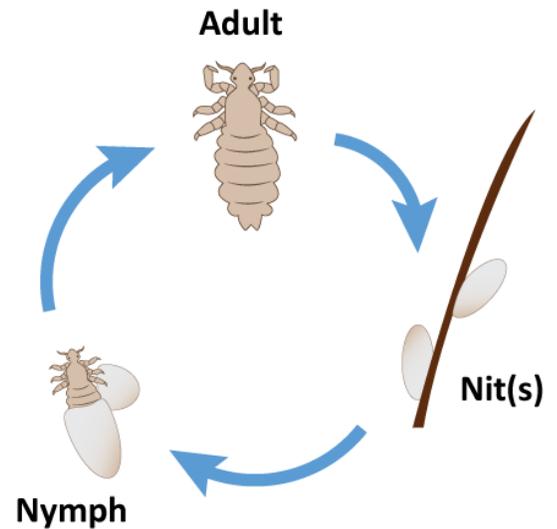


Got Lice? Here's What You Need to Know About Head Lice

Head lice are small insects that live in people's hair and feed on their blood. Head lice are common among school-aged children, but anyone can get head lice. Head lice do not spread disease and having head lice is not a sign of poor hygiene or being "dirty".

Head lice have three different life stages:

1. **Nits** – tiny, oval eggs that are glued to hair. Nits are yellow or white, and nymphs hatch from them within 8-9 days.
2. **Nymphs** – immature lice that become full-grown in 9-12 days and must feed on a person's blood to live. Nymphs look like adult lice but are smaller (the size of a pinhead).
3. **Adult lice** – full-grown lice about the size of a sesame seed that are tan or grayish-white. Adult head lice must feed on blood and will die within 1-2 days if removed from a person's head.



How do people get head lice?

- People get head lice from head-to-head contact with a person who has head lice. Head lice contact occurs most often during family gatherings, play dates, sleepovers, camps, or even when taking selfies.
- Though less common, head lice may also spread by sharing combs, hats, clothing, hair ties or clips, scarves, or other personal items that come in contact with a person's head.
- Head lice are more likely to spread among children at home, daycare, or at a friend's house than at school.
- Head lice glue nits on the hair shaft. Nits found closer to the head (less than ¼ inch from the scalp) usually contain lice that will eventually hatch. Nits located further from the scalp are usually empty or are dead.

How do I know if my child or I have head lice?

- If you or your child have head lice, you may see nits stuck to the hair near the scalp and lice crawling through the hair. Nits should not be confused with dirt or dandruff in the hair, which can be easily brushed away.
- A person with head lice may have a tickling feeling in their hair or an itchy scalp. Intense scratching may also occur.
- Children may be irritable and have difficulty sleeping since head lice are most active at night.

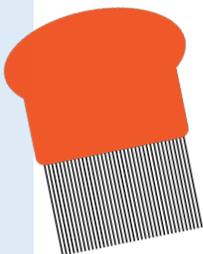
Where are head lice found?

- Head lice are usually found on a person's scalp, especially behind the ears and near the neckline.

The best way to prevent head lice is to not touch heads with someone who has head lice. You may not be able to tell if someone has head lice or not, so it's best not to share personal items that could spread head lice from one person to another, such as hats, scarves, sweaters, headphones, or towels.

Head lice and nits have been found in my hair or my child's hair. Now what?

- Check the hair of everyone in your household to see if they have head lice.
- Over-the-counter products and medications prescribed by a doctor are available to treat head lice. ***Not all products kill nits, and retreatment is often needed 7-10 days after the first treatment, when nits hatch and more head lice are found.***
 - Follow the label directions carefully.
 - Only treat people who have head lice.
 - Do not leave the product on for a longer time than recommended – it will not kill lice faster.
 - Each person with head lice needs a complete treatment. Do not split a single box of shampoo between people.
 - Everyone in the home with head lice needs to be treated the same day.
- **Important:** Comb the hair in-between treatments to remove nits. Use a metal (not plastic) nit comb that has long teeth – several brands are available at your local pharmacy.



- Hair should be combed every 2-3 days for two weeks or until nits are no longer found. The goal is to remove any nits that can hatch new lice.
- It is easier to comb wet hair that has been parted into small sections. Each section of hair should be combed from root to tip. If lice or nits are found, wipe or rinse the comb before using it again.



Treatment doesn't seem to be working. What's wrong?

- The problem is not head lice (nits may look like dandruff or drops of hair styling product).
- The label directions for treatment were not followed properly.
- Lice may be resistant to some available lice treatment products.
- You might have gotten head lice again.

Remember: It takes 8-12 hours for some products to kill head lice. If lice are still active after this time, the product may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with a healthcare provider.

Are there other treatment options for head lice? Do I need to treat my home for lice?

- Devices that blow heated air at high flow towards the scalp and hair have been shown to kill both nits and lice. Treatment requires at least 30 minutes and specialized training for use.
- There is no proof that vinegar, mayonnaise, olive oil, tea tree oil, or products that say they dissolve the glue on the nits “to ease their removal” actually work.
- Fumigation of the home is not necessary. To get rid of lice in the home:
 - Wash clothing, bedding, and other items used by the person with head lice in the 2 days before treatment in hot water (>130°F), then dry on the hottest heat cycle.
 - Place combs, brushes, hair bands, and hair clips in hot water (>130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
 - Vacuum carpets and furniture in areas where the person sat or laid down.

