

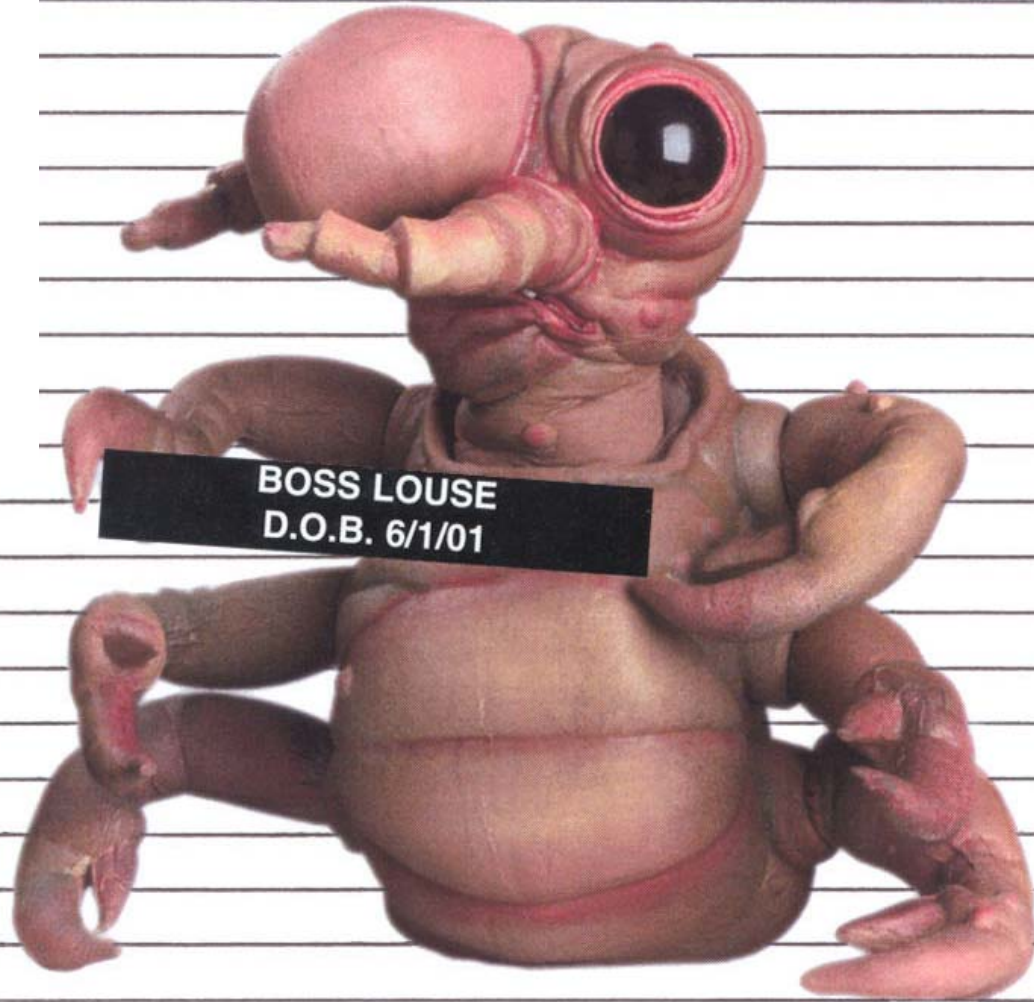
WANTED

Parent Information Packet

to give you all the info you need (or may have wanted to know)

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otherwise known in the medical field as Pediculosis



'Cuz if you don't get 'em out... you've still got 'em!™

Head Lice Infestation

FACTS
and other common questions

What are head lice?

Also called *Pediculus humanus capitis* (peh-DICK-you-lus HUE-man-us CAP-ih-TUS), head lice are parasitic insects found on the heads of people. Having head lice is very common. However, there are no reliable data on how many people get head lice in the United States each year. The head lice feed on blood several times daily and resides close to the scalp to maintain its body temperature.

Who is at risk for getting head lice?

Anyone who comes in close contact with someone who already has head lice, contaminated clothing, and other belongings. Preschool and elementary-age children, 3-10, and their families are infested most often. Girls get head lice more often than boys, women more than men. In the United States, African-Americans rarely get head lice.

What do head lice look like?

There are three forms of lice: the nit, the nymph, and the adult.

Nit: Nits are head lice eggs. They are hard to see and are often confused for dandruff or hair spray droplets. Nits are found firmly attached to the hair shaft. They are oval and usually yellow to white. Nits take about 1 week to hatch.

Nymph: The nit hatches into a baby louse called a nymph. It looks like an adult head louse, but is smaller. Nymphs mature into adults about 7 days after hatching. To live, the nymph must feed on blood.

Adult: The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has six

legs, and is tan to greyish-white. In persons with dark hair, the adult louse will look darker. Females lay nits; they are usually larger than males. Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head. To live, adult lice need to feed on blood. If the louse falls off a person, it dies within 2 days.

Where are head lice most commonly found?

On the scalp behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the neck. Head lice hold on to hair with hook-like claws found at the end of each of their six legs. Head lice are rarely found on the body, eyelashes, or eyebrows.

What are the signs and symptoms of head lice infestation?

- * Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair.
- * Itching, caused by an allergic reaction to the bites.
- * Irritability.
- * Sores on the head caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected.

How did my child get head lice?

- * By contact with an already infested person. Contact is common during play at school and at home (slumber parties, sports activities, at camp, on a playground).
- * By wearing infested clothing, such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, or hair ribbons.
- * By using infested combs, brushes, or towels.
- * By lying on a bed, couch, pillow, carpet, or stuffed animal that has recently been in contact with an infested person.



How is head lice infestation diagnosed?

By looking closely through the hair and scalp for nits, nymphs, or adults. Finding a nymph or adult may be difficult; there are usually few of them and they can move quickly from searching fingers. If crawling lice are not seen, finding nits within a 1/4 inch of the scalp confirms that a person is infested and should be treated. If you only find nits more than 1/4 inch from the scalp, the infestation is probably an old one and does not need to be treated. If you are not sure if a person has head lice, the diagnosis should be made by a health care provider, school nurse, or a professional from the local health department or agricultural extension service.

This packet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you have any questions about the disease described above or think that you may have a parasitic infection, consult a health care provider.

Treating Head Lice

How can I treat a head lice infestation?

By treating the person infested with head lice, other infested family members, and by cleaning the house.

Treat the infested person: Requires using an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication. Follow these treatment steps:

1. Before applying treatment, remove all clothing.
2. Apply lice medicine, also called pediculicide (peh-DICK-you-luh-side), according to label instructions. If your child has extra long hair, you may need to use a second bottle.

WARNING: Do not use a creme rinse or combination shampoo/conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash hair

for 1-2 days after treatment.

3. Have the infested person put on clean clothing after treatment.
4. If a few live lice are still found 8-12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. Comb dead and remaining live lice out of the hair. The medicine may take longer to kill lice.
5. If, after 8-12 hours of treatment, no dead lice are found and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. See your health care provider for a different medication; follow treatment directions.
6. Nit (head lice eggs) combs, often found in lice medicine packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.
7. After treatment, check hair and comb with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks until you are sure all lice and nits are gone.
8. If using OTC pediculicides, retreat in 7-10 days. If using malathion, retreat in 7-10 days only if crawling bugs are found.

Treat the household: Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person. You do not need to spend a lot of time or money on house cleaning activities.

Follow these steps to help avoid re-infestation by lice that have recently fallen off the hair or crawled onto clothing or furniture.

1. To kill lice and nits, machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that the infested person touched during the 2 days before treatment. Use the hot water (130o F) cycle. Dry laundry using high heat for at least 20 minutes
2. Dry clean clothing that is not washable, (coats, hats, scarves, etc.) OR
3. Store all clothing, stuffed animals, comforters, etc., that cannot be washed or dry cleaned into a plastic bag; seal for 2 weeks.
4. Soak combs and brushes for 1 hour in rubbing alcohol, Lysol*,

PREVENT

or wash with soap and hot (130o F) water.

5. Vacuum the floor and furniture. Do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

Prevent Reinfestation:

Lice are most commonly spread directly by head-to-head contact and indirectly through contaminated clothing or belongings.

Teach your child to avoid playtime and other activities that are likely to spread lice.

* Avoid head-to-head contact common during play at school and at home (slumber parties, sports activities, at camp, on a playground).

* Do not share clothing, such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, or hair ribbons.

* Do not share infested combs, brushes, or towels.

* Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.

Common Questions

My child has head lice. I don't. Should I treat myself to prevent being infested?

No, although anyone living with an infested person can get head lice. Check household contacts for lice and nits every 2-3 days. Treat only if crawling lice or nits (eggs) within a 1/4 inch of the scalp are found.

Should my pets be treated for head lice?

No. Head lice do not live on pets.

My child is under 2 years old and has been diagnosed with head lice. Can I treat him or her with prescription or OTC drugs?

For children under 2 years old, remove crawling bugs and nits by hand. If this does not work, ask your child's health care provider for treatment recommendations. The safety of head lice medications has not been tested in children 2 years of age and under.

What OTC medications are available to treat head lice?

Please consult your physician.

When treating head lice:

1. Do not use extra amounts of the lice medication unless instructed. These drugs are insecticides and can be dangerous when misused or overused.
2. Do not treat the infested person more than 3 times with the same medication if it does not seem to work. See your health care provider for alternative medication.
3. Do not mix head lice drugs.

Should household sprays be used to kill adult lice?

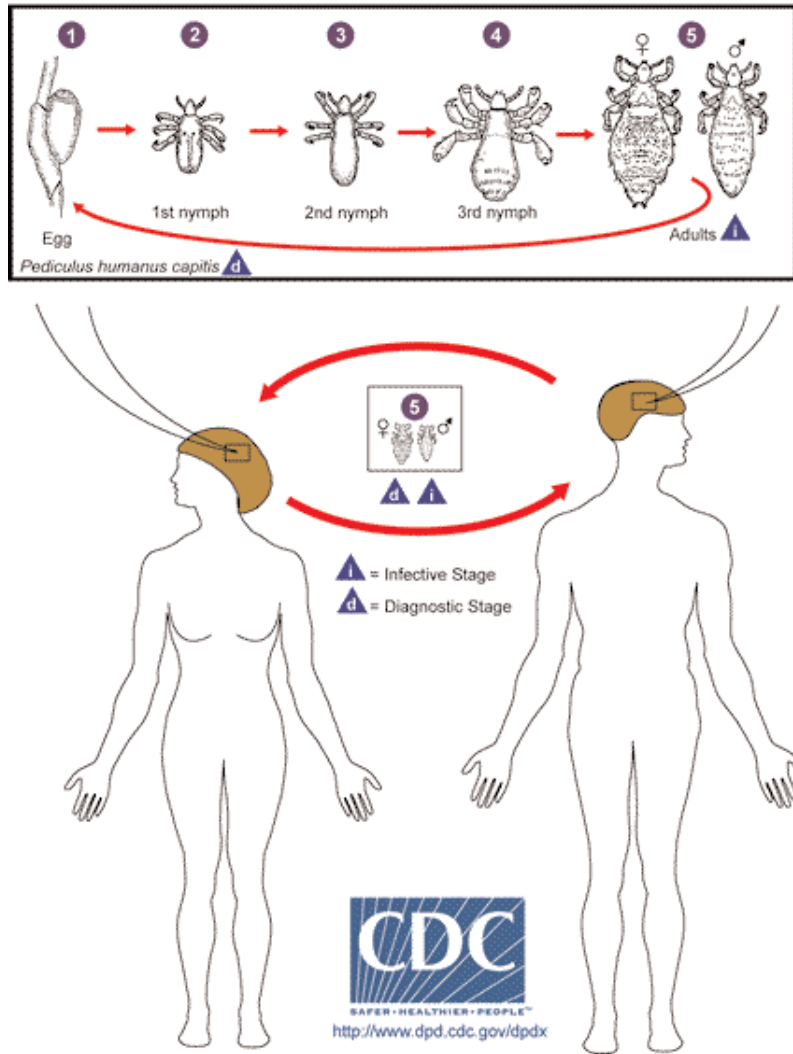
No. Spraying the house is NOT recommended. Fumigants and room sprays can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

Should I have a pest control company spray my house?

No. Vacuuming floors and furniture is enough to treat the household.



LIFE CYCLE



The life cycle of the head louse

Three stages: egg, nymph, and adult.

Eggs

Nits are head lice eggs. They are hard to see and are often confused for dandruff or hair spray droplets. Nits are laid by the adult female and are cemented at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. They are 0.8 mm by 0.3 mm, oval and usually yellow to white. Nits take about 1 week to hatch (range 6 to 9 days). Viable eggs are usually located within 6 mm of the scalp.

Nymphs

The egg hatches to release a nymph. The nit shell then becomes a more visible dull yellow and remains attached to the hair shaft. The nymph looks like an adult head louse, but is about the size of a pinhead. Nymphs mature after three molts and become adults about 7 days after hatching.

Adults

The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has 6 legs (each with claws), and is tan to grayish-white. In persons with dark hair, the adult louse will appear darker. Females are usually larger than males and can lay up to 8 nits per day. Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head. To live, adult lice need to feed on blood several times daily. Without blood meals, the louse will die within 1 to 2 days off the host.