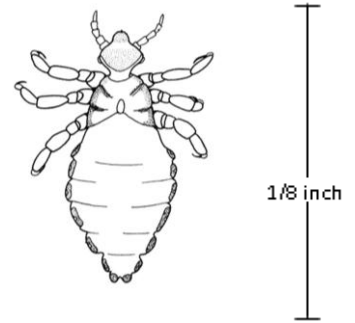


Lice

Lice facts

Head lice are small blood-sucking insects that can cause severe itching. Lice can be difficult to get rid of and are easily spread from one person to another, especially children in schools and child care facilities. *Head lice do not transmit disease.* Anyone can get lice, regardless of cleanliness. Lice are white and about the size of a sesame seed. Lice move by crawling; they cannot fly. Lice glue their tiny eggs, called nits, to hair about 1/4 of an inch away from the scalp. Nits are difficult to kill and must be physically removed from hair with a nit comb.



How lice get on you

Lice can get onto your hair when you come in close contact with an infested person's hair or something their hair has touched, such as clothing, brushes, combs, hair accessories, hats, carpets, pillows, toys, upholstery and furniture.

Signs of lice

Itching is the most common symptom of lice. The only way to tell if someone has lice is to find lice or nits in their hair. Lice and nits are usually found on hair near the scalp, behind ears and at the nape of the neck. Because adult lice are very small, move quickly, and avoid light, they may be difficult to find. Use of a fine-toothed comb and/or a magnifying glass can be helpful in locating lice. Dandruff and hair spray droplets can be mistaken for nits.

Control of spread

Children found with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Once they have completed their first treatment they can return to school even if nits are present. To eliminate head lice successfully, it is very important that all treatment instructions and steps be carefully followed and completed. In addition, the following measures should be taken to prevent further spread of lice:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during school, play, sports, slumber parties, or other events.
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.
- Do not share 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.

Lice removal for objects and homes

Lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. You don't need to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities. However, following these steps will help avoid a re-infestation by lice that have recently fallen off the hair or crawled into clothing or furniture.

- Heat kills lice. Wash items in hot water (at least 130°F – check your water heater setting), drying in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes, ironing with a hot iron, dry cleaning or boiling for at least five minutes.
- Seal non-washable items, like stuffed animals or pillows, in a plastic bag for two weeks. The lice and nits will starve and die.
- Vacuum carpets and upholstery in your home and car.
- Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) or 5-10 minutes.
- Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

(continued on back)

Lice (continued)

Effective lice treatment for people

1. Wash hair with an over-the-counter or prescription lice medication.
 - *Carefully follow instructions.*
 - *Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner or conditioner before using lice medication.*
 - *Do NOT re-wash hair for 1-2 days after lice medicine is removed*
2. If hair is longer than shoulder length, it may be necessary to use two bottles.
3. If, after 8-12 hours of treatment, no dead lice are found and lice still appear active, the medicine may not be working. Consult with a medical professional.
4. Follow label instructions on how to remove nits. Be sure to use a nit comb – **regular combs are too big** to remove nits. If the plastic nit comb that comes with the lice medicine is not sturdy enough, you can buy sturdier metal nit combs at most drug stores.

Note: Nit removal is a long and uncomfortable process, but it is the most important step in getting rid of lice. Comb hair with a regular comb to work out tangles and use two or three helpers to comb out the nits. Be patient – nit removal can take a long time.

5. It is important to remove **all** of the nits because lice shampoos cannot kill nits. Nit removal should be done every 2-3 days for 2-3 weeks to be fully effective.
6. Most lice medications suggest retreatment on day 9. *Again, carefully follow directions on medicine packaging.*