



Head lice

Head lice Anyone with hair on their head can get head lice, regardless of age and hair type. The lice feed on blood, and their bite causes itching. It can be many weeks between being infected with lice and the itching starts. Getting head lice has nothing to do with personal hygiene, and the lice cannot be washed out with standard shampoos.

How can one check for head lice?

- Lay a white towel over the shoulders of the person to be checked
- Damp hair hinders the movements of the lice
- Comb through all the hair systematically with a fine-toothed comb
- Check both the towel and the comb for lice and eggs
- Check children regularly for head lice, at least once monthly

How do I get rid of head lice?

Head lice can be treated with special preparations (chemical treatment), by combing or by cropping the hair down to less than 0.5 cm.

Chemical treatment

A liniment (liquid medication) containing Malation is recommended. Expectant mothers and infants between the ages of 6 months and two years should use a shampoo containing Permetrin. Permetrin can also be used on infants under 6 months in consultation with a physician. These products can be purchased from chemists shops.

Adhere strictly to the instructions for use. Remember that it is only the person or persons that are infected with lice that are to be treated. The products have no preventive characteristics. If several members of a family or circle of friends have lice, all those infected must be treated at the same time to prevent re-infection.

There are a number of products for treating lice on the market that are not medically based. These may have a good effect, but at this point in time there is insufficient scientific documentation to enable any recommendation to be given. Products that contain etheric oils may cause allergic reactions.

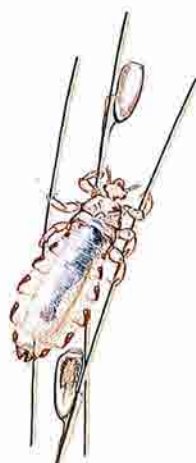
Combing:

Combing using a lice comb must be carried out systematically and thoroughly daily for at least eight days, after this once weekly for three weeks. The hair should be wet when combing. Place a towel over the shoulders of the person being combed to catch lice and eggs that are dislodged. After combing the comb and towel must be washed at 60 °C or frozen for at least four hours to kill the lice and eggs.



To find head lice in long hair, it is advisable to divide the hair into 3 – 6 ponytails and comb through one ponytail at a time.

PHOTO: LENE SOLBAKKEN



Lice egg are exceptionally well-attached to the hair.

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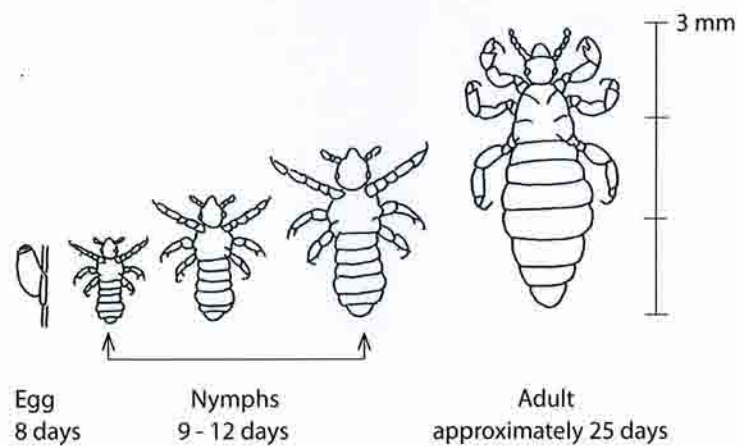


How do head lice infect?

Head lice cannot jump or fly, but creep from head to head during close contact. There is a very small chance that lice will spread via pillows, cushions, furniture, soft toys clothes and similar. Borrowing headwear, brushes, combs, hairclips and similar from someone who is infected by lice is nonetheless not recommended. A case of head lice is seldom an isolated occurrence. Without proper treatment both family and close friends can repeatedly re-infect each other.

Lice in kindergartens and in schools

If lice are discovered on a child in a kindergarten or school, it is not necessary to send the child home. It is most probable that the child has been carrying the lice for some time, so an hour or two is of no consequence. The child can continue at the kindergarten or school as usual, but should commence with a lice cure as soon as possible. The kindergarten/school and circle of friends should be told if a child in the vicinity has head lice in order to avoid re-infection.



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