

Head Lice Information for Parents (www.CDC.gov)

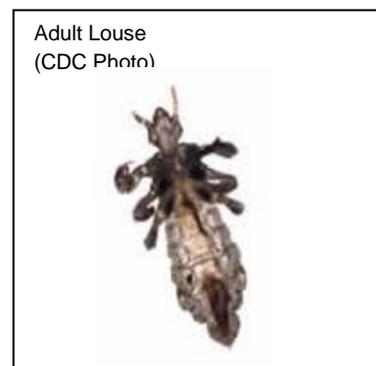
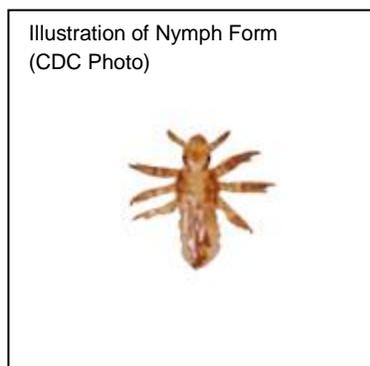
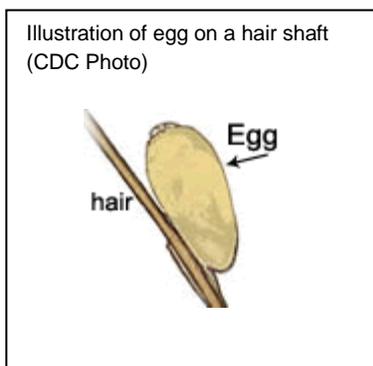
Students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.

Getting head lice is not related to cleanliness of the person or his environment; however, good hygiene is still important to help prevent and control the spread of head lice.

You should examine your child's head, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck, for crawling lice and nits if your child exhibits symptoms of a head lice infestation. If crawling lice or nits are found, all household members should be examined for crawling lice and nits every 2–3 days. Persons with live (crawling) lice or nits within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or less of the scalp should be treated.

To eliminate head lice successfully, it is very important that all treatment instructions and steps be carefully followed and completed. CDC does not make recommendations as to what specific product or products should be used to treat individuals. Both over-the-counter and prescription products are available. You may wish to contact your doctor, pharmacist, or health department for additional information about which product they recommend.

What do Head Lice Look Like? Head lice have three forms: the egg or nit, the nymph, and the adult.



Explanation of Head Lice Stages

Egg/Nit: Nits are lice eggs laid by the adult female head louse at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. Nits are firmly attached to the hair shaft and are oval-shaped and very small (about the size of a knot in thread) and hard to see. Nits often appear yellow or white although live nits sometimes appear to be the same color as the hair of the infested person. Nits are often confused with dandruff, scabs, or hair spray droplets. Head lice nits usually take about 8–9 days to hatch. Eggs that are likely to hatch are usually located no more than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft. Nits located further than ¼ inch from the base of hair shaft may very well be already hatched, non-viable nits, or empty nits or casings. This is difficult to distinguish with the naked eye. (see photo)

Nymph: A nymph is an immature louse that hatches from the nit. A nymph looks like an adult head louse, but is smaller. To live, a nymph must feed on blood. Nymphs mature into adults about 9–12 days after hatching from the nit.

Adult: The fully grown and developed adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has six legs, and is tan to grayish-white in color. Adult head lice may look darker in persons with dark hair than in persons with light hair. To survive, adult head lice must feed on blood. An adult head louse can live about 30 days on a person's head but will die within one or two days if it falls off a person. Adult female head lice are usually larger than males and can lay about six eggs each day.

For more information on Head Lice visit these websites:

- www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html
- or www.co.midland.mi.us/health



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