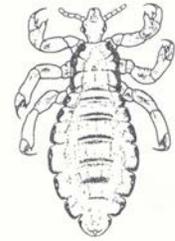


Anyone can have head lice!

Head lice are no indication of a lack of personal cleanliness since lice can feel at home and breed on even the most hygienically clean head. The main reason for the ever increasing number of incidences of lice is a lack of knowledge on transfer, reproduction and control of these parasitic insects. It is thus no disgrace to have lice but it is a disgrace not to get rid of them.



Lice are always transferred by humans or by objects of daily use.

Head lice prefer humans as hosts and can easily move from one person to another through head-to-head contact or if combs, brushes, caps or jerseys are shared or stored in close proximity of one another or if backrests and headrests are not thoroughly treated with an insecticide.

Lice are an irritation and can lead to skin diseases.

If the head itches more than usual causing the person to scratch continuously, somebody should check whether there are any of these blood-feeding animals on the scalp. The best is to part the hair section by section and to use a magnifying glass to check for lice and their eggs (nits).

Particular attention should be paid to the areas around the temples, ears and neck. Especially in longer, thicker hair, these areas have the ideal temperature for eggs. Fully-grown six-legged female lice are up to 3 mm in length and are of Greyish colour. If they have just fed on blood – this happens every 2 to 3 hours - they appear reddish. The saliva that enters the skin during the feeding process causes strong itching. This leads to scratching and scratching wounds that can be infected by pyogenic organisms and dermatophytes. This in turn will lead to unsightly, purulent skin rashes with swelling of lymph nodes. In this case a doctor must be consulted.

You should, however, not only be on the lookout for lice but also for their eggs, the nits. These are approximately 0,8 mm in length and of shiny whitish to yellowish colour and can only just be identified with the eye. They stick to the hair like "pearls on a string", particularly near the scalp. That is why nits are not removed by simple washing of hair. Because of their tiny size they are often also not removed through simple combing of the hair.

Even the empty nit shells remain stuck to the hair after the nymphal lice have hatched.

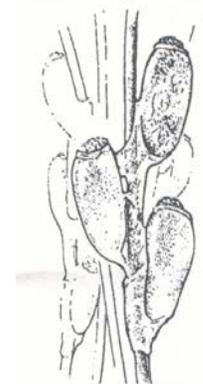
After about 10 days and three larval stages, during which they constantly suck blood, female lice have reached sexual maturity and lay approx. 4 eggs per day up to a total of 90. In severe cases of lice infestation these eggs can even be laid on material fibres of e.g. scarves, caps and hats.

Lice can cause infection with relapsing fever, trench fever and typhus fever. Lice play, however, only a minor role in the transmission of infectious agents.

Lice live for approximately 3 weeks.

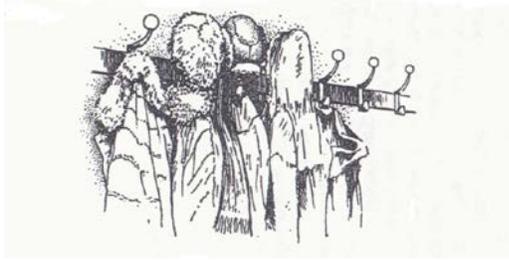
A louse generation requires about 18 days for development from one egg to the next. Of these 18 days, the larval stage is 8½ days and 1 to 2 days after the last sloughing of the skin, the fertilised female louse can lay eggs.

This developmental cycle is important to know in order to be able to effectively combat lice. Because even if only a few nits survive, young nymphal lice will hatch after a few days and the infestation will start again.



Delousing treatment can be obtained in pharmacies.

You can buy different forms of treatment in pharmacies across the counter or with a prescription from your family doctor or paediatrician. Never treat babies yourself but always consult your family doctor or paediatrician.



Treatment can be obtained in liquid, powder or gel form; a powdery substance is available to combat lice on clothing, caps or other textiles.

All treatments must be used strictly in accordance with the instructions. Treatment does not cause any pain, it is easy to carry out, it has no unpleasant smell and can be done at home.

Children and pupils may attend school, kindergarten or other community facilities on the day after the first treatment if no more nits are found in the hair. Dead

nits can easily be removed with the help of a very fine comb developed for the removal of nits. If the hair is rinsed with vinegar (3 tablespoons per 1 litre of water), the procedure is even easier.

Repeat treatment after 8 to 10 days.

8 – 10 days is the longest period between the laying of eggs and the hatching of nymphal lice. It is thus good to repeat the first treatment after this period to ensure that all lice are indeed removed. In any event the success of treatment should be carefully controlled. Such a control should also be done after skin-friendly liquid or gel treatment was applied that fight lice and their eggs at the same time.

Lice spread rapidly.

As soon as lice are discovered, all family members should be checked for lice, since lice spread very rapidly. If they occur in schools, kindergartens or communal shelters, all persons frequenting these areas should be checked.

In order to avoid being reinfested with lice it is essential to thoroughly clean combs, hair and clothing brushes; towels, bedding, underwear and tops must be washed or left unused for at least one week. Non-washable textile objects, e.g. carpets, soft toys as well as car headrests and seats can be treated with a delousing powder or in a disinfecting station. In severe cases it may be necessary to thoroughly vacuum clean living rooms and bedrooms so that all hairs are removed and to then apply a suitable delousing agent.

Lice can also be starved.

It is also possible to get rid of lice that are found on objects, on clothing, in rooms etc. by starving them. Place the infested clothing in a plastic bag for 4 weeks and store this bag in a warm location. The hotter it is the quicker lice starve: at 25 to 30° C they can survive for another 2 days, at 10 to 20° C they can survive another 7 days and can still lay hatchable eggs after 5 days. Rooms, such as bedrooms, living rooms, communal rooms – in private homes or in schools or kindergartens – can be freed of lice in a few days by simply not being used and being overheated. Feel free to contact your family doctor or health department with any questions surrounding the issue of lice.

Community facilities such as schools, kindergartens etc. may not be visited by persons with lice.