

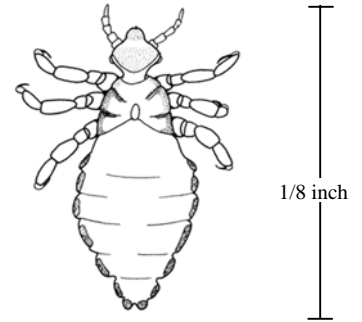
Lice

The Lice problem

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 day care center.

Lice facts

Anyone can get lice, regardless of cleanliness. Lice are white and about the size of a sesame seed. 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 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. If one person in a house or classroom has lice, everyone should be checked daily.

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. A bright light and a magnifying glass can be helpful in locating lice. Dandruff and hair spray droplets are often mistaken for nits.

Lice removal for objects and homes

- Heat kills lice. Heat items by washing 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.
- Lice sprays can be used on furniture. Lice sprays are insecticides and should only be used on objects, never on people or pets.

Effective lice treatment for people

1. Wash hair with Prell® or baby shampoo to remove conditioners from hair.
2. Thoroughly towel dry hair. Do not blow dry – hair should be slightly damp.
3. Apply lice shampoo to towel-dried hair. Follow the label instructions carefully! (Lice shampoos, which can be purchased over the counter, contain chemicals that kill lice.)

(continued on back)



**Tri-County Health
Department**

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Lice (continued)

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 shampoo 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 night for 10 to 14 days to be fully effective. Wet hair with warm water, wrap in a towel and wait one hour. Apply a small amount of cream rinse and use a nit comb to remove the rest of the nits.
6. Check hair daily for any lice or nits that may not have been removed. A second treatment may be needed in 7 to 10 days. **Do not** repeat the shampoo treatment more often than the lice shampoo label recommends.