



What are Lice?

Lice are parasitic insects that can be found on your head and body, including the pubic area. Lice from different parts of the body are different from each other and only body lice are known to spread disease. Lice survive by feeding on human blood.

What are the symptoms of lice?

- The presence of a live louse.
- Identification of nits (eggs) on the hair shaft.
- Tickling feeling of something crawling in your hair.
- Some individuals may have an allergic reaction 1-2 weeks after infestation.
- Soreness and crusting from scratching that can result in swelling or infection.

Who can get lice?

- Anyone can get lice under suitable conditions of exposure - it is not a sign of bad personal hygiene.
- Lice can infect any individual of any age, race, sex, or socio-economic level.
- Worldwide, head lice are more common in children.

How are lice spread?

- Direct person-to-person contact.
- Sharing personal items such as brushes, combs, hats, and hair accessories.
- Lice can crawl from one individual to another, they cannot jump or fly.
- You cannot get human lice from pets.
- Lice can be spread as long as lice or viable eggs remain alive on the infested individual.
- Lice that fall off the head will die within 20-48 hours without blood to feed on.
- Nits (eggs) will not hatch off the body because they require warmth and humidity.
- Lice can survive 24-hours immersed in water.

How to prevent the spread of lice?

- All household and close contacts should be examined and treated at the same time if infestation is discovered.
- Do not share personal items such as brushes, combs, hats, and hair accessories.
- Once found and treated, periodically check the area to ensure no new lice have hatched.

What is the treatment for lice?

1. Detection

- Dampen hair, bend over a plain sheet of paper and comb hair with a fine-tooth comb. Look to see if any lice have dropped to the paper.
- Tap head with a piece of transparent tape; lice will stick to the tape.
- Apply white conditioner to dry hair covering from root to tip and comb with a head lice comb. Wipe comb into a tissue paper and look for lice. Remove conditioner before applying treatment.

2. Medication

- A special cream rinse or shampoo will be used as a first treatment.
- Apply the same product 7-10 days after the first treatment. If there are living lice on the scalp 24 hours post-treatment, immediate re-treatment is recommended with a different product (follow product instructions for use).
- If you are pregnant or breast feeding, you should wear waterproof (rubber, latex, etc.) gloves when doing treatment.
- Anyone with skin conditions or convulsive disorders should first speak to their physician.
- Cream rinse or shampoo can be potentially toxic if used incorrectly.

3. Environment

- Reinfestation will occur if the problem is not addressed at the environmental level.
- All items that have come into contact with the infested individual have to be washed in hot water. The heat of the water or the hot cycle on the dryer will kill any live nits or lice.
- Anything that cannot be washed will have to be dry cleaned or placed in a tightly sealed plastic bag and left for 14 days. You can also put them in the freezer for 48-72 hours.
- Combs, hairbrushes, and hair accessories should be cleaned in hot water or a pediculicide for 5-10 minutes.