

Lice Awareness Wednesday

Living in your hair

Head lice – parasitic insects that can cause itching, irritability and sores caused by scratching – have a three-stage life cycle.

Size comparison

Nit (egg)



Nymph



Adult



1 Nit

Tiny eggs are laid at base of hair shaft; often confused with dandruff



2 Nymph

Nits hatch into baby insects; become reddish-brown after feeding on human blood



3 Adult

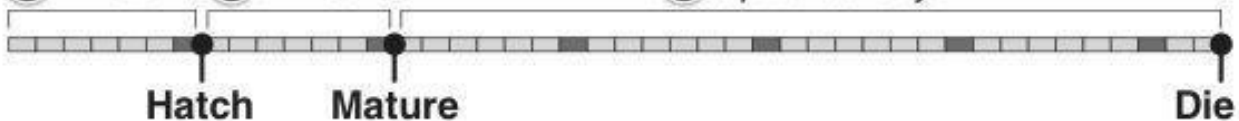
Adults rely on blood to live; females can lay up to 100 eggs



1 1 week

2 1 week

3 Up to 30 days



Getting them

- Head lice are transmitted through contact of the head or hair of the infested individual
- Can be passed through clothing or personal items, such as hair brushes

Treatment

- Wash clothing and bedding of infested person
- Over-the-counter and prescription medications
- Manually remove bugs and nits with nit comb

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HeadLice.org
Graphic: Chicago Tribune

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