

Head lice: Are you Scratching for Answers?

A resource for children

What are head lice?

What do we know about head lice?

Head lice are tiny egg laying insects.



Photo: Professor Rick Speare

Who gets head lice?

Only people do!



A common myth about head lice:

Head lice can make you very sick

False!

They are in fact harmless and do not spread disease.

Another common myth about head lice:

All children scratch when they have head lice

False

Less than half do

True or false

Head lice can fly and jump from one head to another

False!

In fact head lice don't jump but do crawl very fast. They spread by crawling from head to head.

Where do they live?

Head lice only live on our heads.



How do we get head lice?

Head lice crawl from one head to another when we have our heads very close to another person.

This could be:

- Close friends
- Classmates
- Your brothers or sisters



What do head lice look like?

Here's a close up.



Photo: Professor Rick Speare

What is a nit?

It's a head lice egg. It hatches after 7 days.

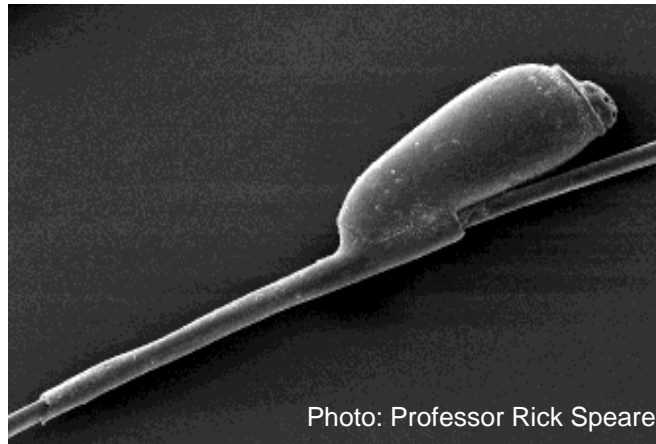


Photo: Professor Rick Speare

What do head lice do?

- Head lice feed on our blood.
- They cling to hair and swing from hair to hair like acrobats.



Head lice claw

How can we avoid getting head lice?

- Check your hair every week for head lice using conditioner and a head lice comb
- If you have long hair tie it up during the day



How do I look for head lice?

You will need:

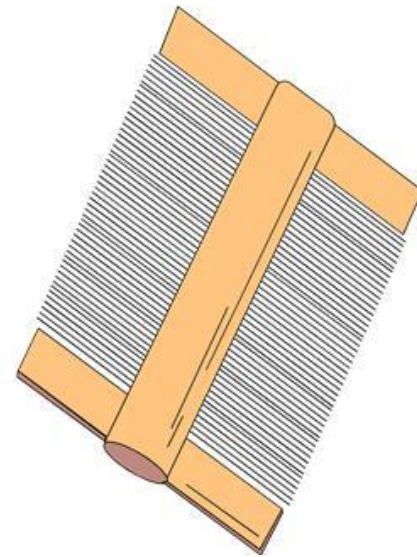
- White conditioner
- A normal comb or brush
- A head lice comb
- Tissues
- Help from a grown up

Comb the conditioner onto dry, brushed hair

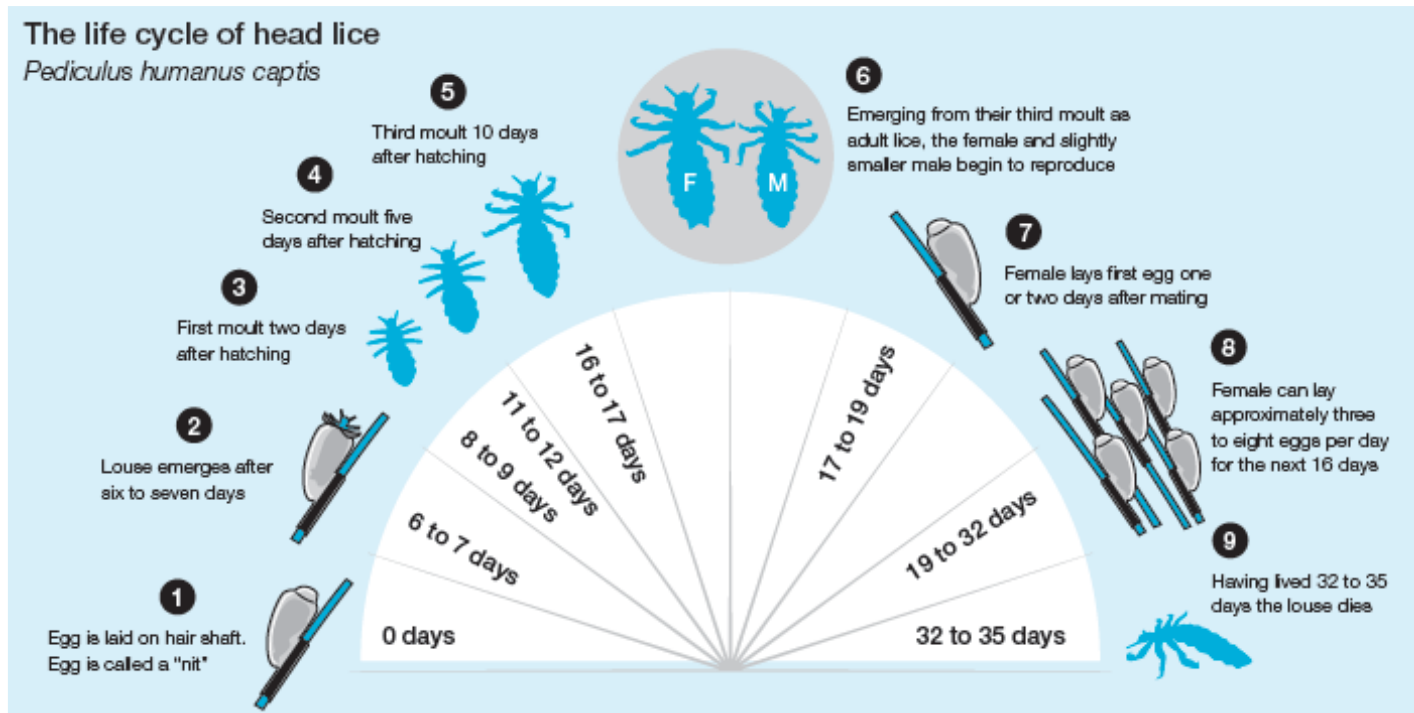
Use the head lice comb to comb sections of hair

Wipe the conditioner onto a paper towel

Look for lice and eggs



To get rid of lice you have to stop them breeding



Life cycle of a head louse

What should I do if I have head lice?

- Tell your friends and your teacher
- Check everyone's hair in your family
- Get rid of them by using a head lice comb and conditioner every 2nd day until you haven't found any head lice for 10 days or by using a head lice treatment (retreat after 7 days)
- You can go back to school after you've had a head lice treatment



Need more information?

Have a look at these great websites

www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice

www.health.qld.gov.au/headlice



Good luck and happy hunting!

