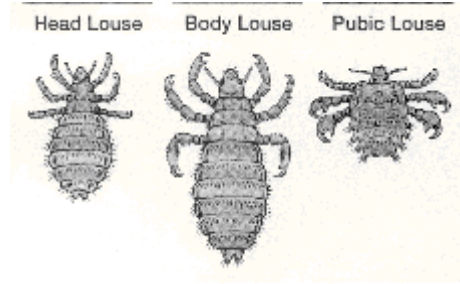


The Life Cycle of Lice



An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed.

There are three forms of head lice.

- **Louse** is the term used to describe an adult. An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed and tan to grayish-white in color. Adult lice may live up to 30 days on a person's head, and the female can lay between 100 to 200 eggs during that lifespan.
- **Nit** is the term for a louse egg. They are very hard to see and may be confused with hair spray droplets or dandruff. Nits are oval and usually yellow to white.
- **Nymph** is the term for a newly hatched baby louse. It differs from an adult louse only in size. Nymphs mature into adults in about 7 days.

When a female louse finds its way onto the head of a person, she starts laying eggs, or nits, along with a glue that firmly attaches the nits to the hair close to the scalp. An adult female can deposit **6-8 nits in 2 days!**

In a week or so, the nits hatch, and the newborn lice take their first meal of blood from the person's head by attaching itself to the hair shaft, an inch from the scalp.

It takes about 10 days for a newborn louse to become an adult. Once an adult, the female louse can start laying eggs. This means it only takes 16 days for an egg (nit) to become a female louse capable of laying more eggs! Adult lice live for 9-10 days, making the total life span of a louse from egg to adult about 25 days.

How Lice Spread

Lice spread from person to person when people are in close contact or when they share clothing or personal items that have been in contact with the head or neck -- coats, scarves, hats, brushes and combs.

Remember...

Lice do not fly or jump; they can only crawl.

Lice can infest anyone...young, old, rich, poor, clean or dirty.

Avoid sharing personal items such as hats, coats, brushes, combs, and pillows.

Nit Tips . . .

- Nits are hard to remove from the hair.
- Nits feel like little grains of sand stuck to the hair. You may feel them before you see them.
- Dandruff can be flicked off with your finger. Nits cannot.
- Nits are tiny and yellowish-white. Dandruff is larger and white.