

Information about lice

Lice are insects that live in people's hair. They feed on blood, which they suck when they bite. They are very common during school age.

How are they transmitted?

They are transmitted from one person to another through direct contact. When heads touch or come close together, the louse easily passes from one hair to another. Transmission can also occur through sharing combs or other hair accessories.

Once in the hair, the louse grows quickly, laying its eggs close to the scalp. Each female louse lays 6 to 10 nits (which are the louse's eggs) per day. In 8–10 days, a new louse hatches from the egg and immediately begins to bite. Within two weeks, this louse becomes an adult and starts to reproduce.

Their ability to multiply and to spread easily from one person to another explains the high capacity lice have to spread.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are **itching and scratching**. When this occurs, the head should be examined, especially behind the ears and near the nape of the neck, looking for lice or nits. Nits appear as small white specks firmly attached to the hair. At first glance, they can be confused with dandruff, but dandruff flakes off easily, while nits remain stuck and must be pulled off. Dead nits detach more easily.

How are they treated?

You can use preparations that contain anti-parasitic agents for lice. The most commonly used medicines are pyrethroid derivatives, especially 1% permethrin in cream or lotion form. It can be used from 3 months of age, although in children under 2 years — especially under 6 months — it's better to remove the lice and nits manually.

Steps for treatment:

Apply the anti-parasitic lotion to Leave it on for 10 minutes, then rinse with warm water. Always read the product's instructions beforehand. Avoid contact with eyes, nose, and mouth.

With the hair still wet, remove lice and nits by hand (the most effective method) or with a fine-toothed comb (nit comb).

After the first application, check the head daily for two weeks, and if any nits or lice are found, remove them by hand.

To help loosen nits, you can use a mixture of water and vinegar (equal parts), applying it with a soaked towel after the anti-parasitic treatment for 30–60 minutes.

After 7–10 days, repeat the treatment with the same product. This ensures that any lice that have hatched from remaining nits are also eliminated.

Lice survive only 1–2 days outside the human body. Clothes, towels, and bedding should be washed in hot water. Combs and hair accessories should be soaked in the anti-parasitic lotion for 10 minutes. Items that cannot be washed can be sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks.

What if the lice don't go away?

If the infestation persists despite repeated treatment, you can use 1% permethrin for 30–60 minutes, or even leave it on overnight (with a shower cap).

If lice still cannot be eliminated, other options include oral medications (such as cotrimoxazole or ivermectin) or topical treatments like 4% dimethicone shampoo. In these cases, it is best to consult a healthcare professional for guidance.

Some treatments in different regions use plant-based remedies, such as tea tree oil, coconut oil, and other aromatic plant extracts. Their effectiveness and safety depend on the specific preparation used.

Can they be prevented?

Lice can appear in any environment and are not related to poor hygiene.

Therefore, it's enough to **maintain normal hygiene habits**. If a child starts to feel itchy, check whether lice are the cause — and if so, treat them.

Preventive treatments with lotions or parasite-repelling colognes should not be used if the child is not infected. Treatment should only be used when lice are found.

Children should not be excluded from school, and an infected child may return to school after treatment.