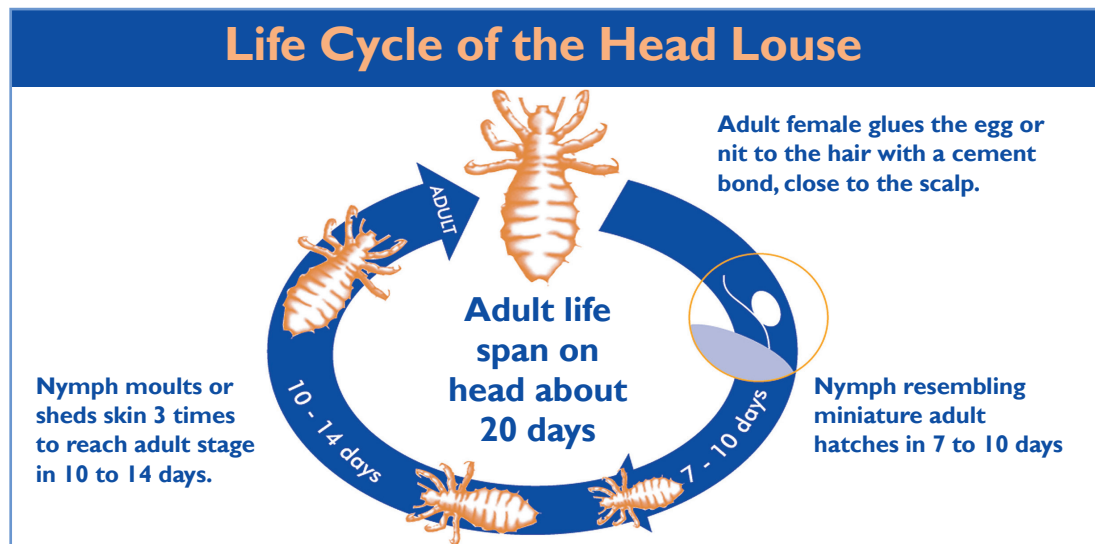


# Head Lice

## What are head lice?

Head lice, or louse are a common parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows and eyelashes of people. Head lice feed on human blood and live close to the human scalp. Head lice are not known to spread disease. There are three forms of head lice; nit (egg), nymph or adult.



### Nit (eggs)

- Half the size of the head of a pin and shaped like a tear drop
- Are a creamy colour and found close to the scalp, on the shaft of the hair
- Are cemented to the hair so they cannot be blown or flicked off

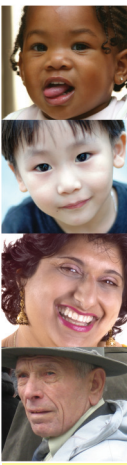
### Nymph - immature louse

- Transparent or rust coloured after blood meal and very difficult to see
- Reaches maturity in about 10 days
- Lice have six legs with claws so they can cling to human hair

### Adult - mature louse

- Larger than a nymph
- The female louse can lay up to 150 eggs during the life span
- Lice do not like movement or light and crawl from head to head

For further information, please call:  
**York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653**  
**TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)**



## Head lice will cause:

- Itchy scalp; especially around the hair line and behind the ears
- Tickling in the hair
- Sores caused by scratching the itchy bites

Head lice move by crawling quickly not hopping or flying. Head lice are spread by direct head to head contact or sharing personal items like hats, scarves or brushes. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

A co-operative community effort will help to control the spread of head lice. This means that all families need to have regular head checks and treat their children if head lice are found.

## Steps to check for head lice:

- Sit in a well lit area - near a sunny window or bright lamp
- Divide the hair into sections and look carefully, one section at a time
- Look carefully in the hair, behind the ears, nape of neck, hairline of the head
- Check the heads of all family members

## Be sensitive to children's feelings if they have head lice.

If you find head lice or nits, proceed with treatment. Speak to a pharmacist or health professional about treatments and follow the directions on the package.

If you don't see lice or nits, continue to check the head regularly twice a week for one month, or more often, if your child has been in close contact with a confirmed case of head lice.

## To control the spread of head lice:

- Do not share personal items
- Wash all bedding, towels and hats in hot water or use a hot drying cycle. Place items that can't be washed into airtight bags for 10 days to two weeks
- Vacuum surfaces where head may have rested, but no extra cleaning of the home is required
- Use treatments if live lice or nits are found in the hair. Check the head daily and repeat treatments if necessary
- Follow-up with anyone who may have had close contact to ensure they are checked for lice

SickKids

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/ConditionsandDiseases/SkinHairandNailDisorders/Pages/Headlice.aspx>

Canadian Paediatric Society:

<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/whensick/HeadLice.htm>

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