

# PEDICULUS HUMANUS CAPITIS

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WHAT'S THAT?!

WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH  
ME?

# Head Lice

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- ❑ Millions of kids each year get lice.
  - ❑ Lice are tiny insects the size of a sesame seed.
  - ❑ They can NOT fly or jump – only crawl.
  - ❑ They live on human heads and need warmth and blood to survive or they will die in 1-2 days off the head.
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# Head Louse

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# Head Lice

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- ❑ The insect has 6 legs and each leg has a claw at the end to grip the human hair and hang on.
  - ❑ The louse detects vibration and will hide if you move the hair. It can crawl 6-30 cm/minute!
  - ❑ The louse can “camouflage” itself by changing it’s color to match the host’s hair color.
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# Life Cycle of Head Lice

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- ❑ Egg – The female louse lays eggs the size of a poppy seed near the hair root. It is attached by a waterproof glue and can't be blown or washed away. It takes about 10 days to hatch.
  - ❑ Nits – The empty eggshells after the louse hatches. These are usually farther down on the hair because of hair growth.
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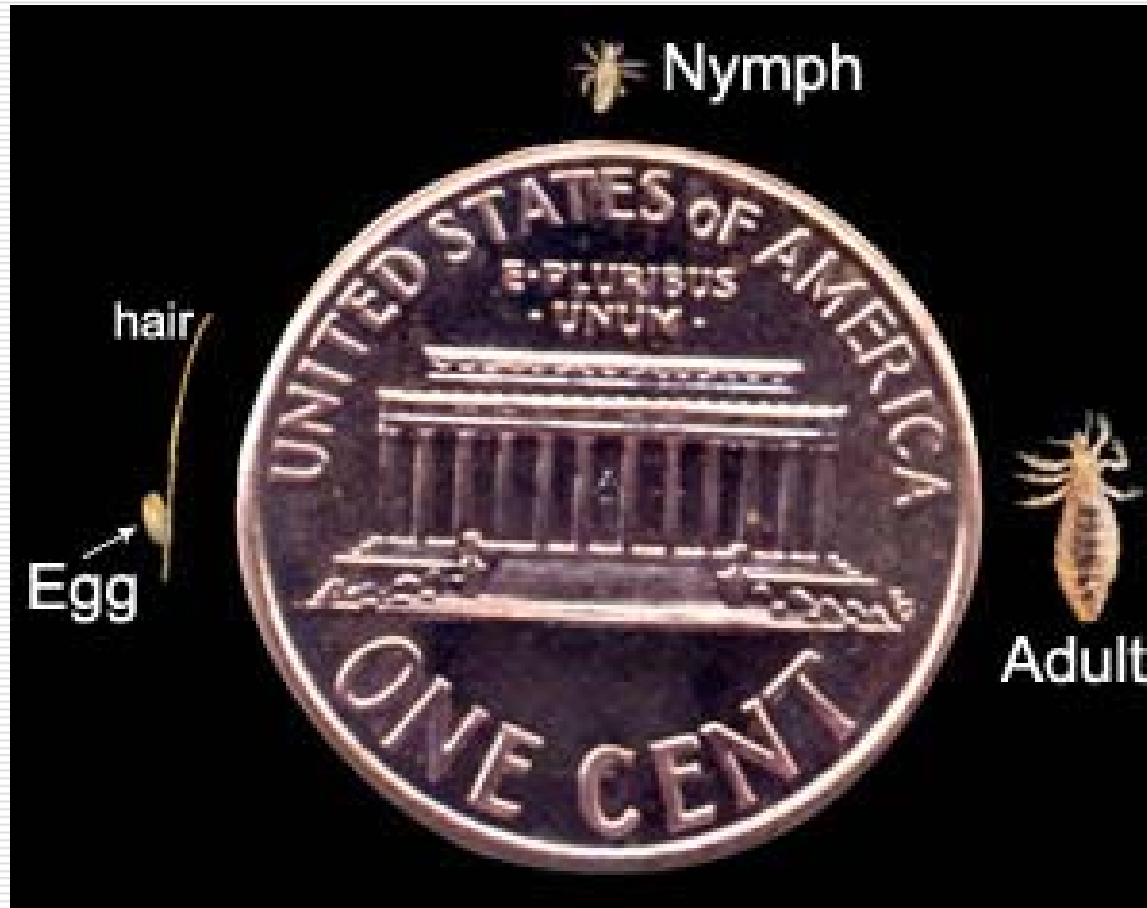
## Head Lice Life Cycle, cont.

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- ❑ Nymphs – “baby” lice which can not lay eggs yet. These live for about 12 days and can't be seen by the human eye.
  - ❑ Adult louse – These can live for 28 days (4 weeks) and the females can lay 4-10 eggs/day (or 280 eggs per louse!)
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# Head Lice Life Cycle

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# Symptoms of Head Lice

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- ❑ Half the kids **DON'T** feel anything at all.
  - ❑ Other kids feel itchy, especially around the ears and at the nape of the neck. It can take **4-6 weeks before itching starts** (time to become sensitive to the louse saliva.)
  - ❑ If there are many eggs, you may see them and they could look like dandruff.
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# Head Lice Detection

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- ❑ Parents can wet the child's hair, spray on conditioner, divide hair in 4 sections with hair clips, and use a fine tooth comb from hair root to end.
  - ❑ After each swipe of the comb, wipe the comb on paper towel to see if any eggs, nits or lice are present.
  - ❑ Wetting the hair slows the louse.
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# Detecting Lice With a Comb

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# Head Lice Detection at School

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- ❑ The school nurse can check the child's head for eggs, nits and lice by just looking closely.
  - ❑ Some schools use battery-operated combs to detect lice but these require cleaning and have some pitfalls.
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# Looking for Lice

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# How Do You Treat Lice?

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- NONE of the treatments hurt.
  - There are over-the-counter medicines available such as Nix and RID.
  - Cetaphil Lotion “Shrink Wrap”
  - Prescription Only Remedies like Kwell
  - “Herbal” Remedies – Kleen Free, Tea Tree Oil
  - Battery-Operated Combs
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# Nix (1% Permethrin)

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- ❑ Synthetic (man-made) drug – most commonly recommended by doctors.
  - ❑ Cream Rinse applied to towel-dried hair and left on for 10 minutes, then rinsed off. Leaves a residue to kill nymphs that are still going to hatch from eggs.
  - ❑ Repeat in 7-10 days if still see live lice.
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## Nix, continued

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- Do not shampoo for 24 hours post Nix.
  - Avoid chlorine for 2 weeks.
  - Avoid conditioners, cream rinse, mousse gels, hair spray, hair color, mayo, vinegar for 2 weeks
  - Can use equal parts vinegar/water BEFORE Nix to help remove nits.
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# RID – Natural pyrethrin

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- ❑ Made from natural extracts of chrysanthemum flowers.
  - ❑ Apply to dry hair, shampoo and rinse after 10 minutes, **must repeat in 7-10 days.**
  - ❑ Rinse over sink (not shower) to avoid excessive skin contact.
  - ❑ Use cool water to decrease absorption (hot water opens up blood vessels.)
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# Nix or RID (Permethrin) Tips

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- Read all the instructions.
  - Apply to dry hair (wet hair will dilute the medicine) for Nix.
  - You need to use more for longer hair.
  - You must comb out eggs and nits with a fine-toothed comb.
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# Cetaphil Cleanser Treatment

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- ❑ Apply Cetaphil to scalp, blow dry until it forms a “shrink wrap” and then shampoo out the next morning.
  - ❑ This method works by suffocation of the louse.
  - ❑ 96% effective which is equivalent to Nix or RID.
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# Kleen Free

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- Some Marengo parents have used this method – it is reported to work by loosening the glue that attaches the egg.
  - I am not aware of any formal studies.
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# Tea Tree Oil or other Home Remedies

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- ❑ Some parents swear by Tea Tree Oil – 10 drops to shampoo.
  - ❑ Home remedies (vaseline, olive oil, mayonnaise) can be very messy and need to be kept on overnight under a shower cap and then rinsed.
  - ❑ All these remedies still need nit removal.
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# Prescription Options

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- ❑ Lice are becoming resistant to treatments so sometimes a prescription medicine such as Kwell (1% Lindane) is needed.
  - ❑ There are side effects to this medication and they should be discussed with your pediatrician or family doctor.
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# Battery-Operated Combs

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- Robi-Comb developed in 1991, combs through the hair and sends an electric signal to kill lice. Use it daily for 12 days to kill any lice that hatch (Remember it takes 10 days for the egg to hatch.)
  - You still need to remove nits.
  - Use on dry hair only.
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# Battery Operated Combs

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- ❑ MagiComb – removes nits and lice from the hair using very closely spaced nickel-silver teeth in the comb. Uses 2 C batteries.
  - ❑ Again, use on dry hair only.
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# Don't Forget To Clean...

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- Home and Car Upholstery (Boosters)
  - Mattresses, Pillows, Pillow Cases and Sheets
  - Towels
  - Hats, Hair bands, barrettes
  - Helmets
  - Head Phones
  - Stuffed Animals and Plush Toys
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# And Don't Forget...

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- Coats, Scarves, Ear Muffs, Gloves
  - Play Mats
  - Clothes
  - Hair Rollers
  - Combs and Brushes
  - Backpacks
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# How Do You Clean Everything?

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- Hot Water Laundry and at least 20 minutes on the "Hot" Cycle in the dryer.
  - Seal stuffed animals/toys in a plastic baggie for 2-4 weeks.
  - Disinfect combs and brushes in hot boiling water for 10 minutes.
  - Spray upholstery and then vacuum.
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# What About Family Members?

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- Check everyone for head lice.
  - Treat if you see live lice or eggs.
  - If family members share the same bed, treat even if you don't see lice.
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# How Do You Prevent Lice?

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- Don't share hats, jackets, combs or hair accessories.
  - If you are itching – let the teacher or nurse know and tell your parents.
  - If you have friends with lice, check yourself whether you itch or not.
  - If you have lice, let your classmates know so that everyone can be screened.
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# Is it Dangerous to Have Lice?

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- No, it is only a nuisance. You can't get any diseases from lice.
  - There should be no shame in having lice. It's no different than catching a cold.
  - Pets do not get or give people lice.
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