

Headlice

Kopfläuse



Parents' Guide

Patienten-Ratgeber Englisch

The family business InfectoPharm and Pädia are among the leading manufacturers of medicines and health products for children in particular.

We develop high-quality innovative products for young and older children to make treatment easier and thereby improve its success. Doctors, midwives and pharmacists put their faith in the quality and effectiveness of our products and appreciate our long-standing experience. This is the reason why patients enjoy using the extensive range of our easy-to-understand service and information materials.

We are very pleased if we can help you and your family with this guide in the current situation and wish you a speedy recovery



The Zöller Family

Dear Parents, Dear Patients!

Every day in Germany, hundreds – even thousands – of people are infected with head lice. The term “infected” is used here quite intentionally, because an infestation with lice is just like catching a cold in a way that it can happen to anyone. There is nothing shameful about having lice, nor does it reflect personal hygiene in any way.

While a head louse infestation is not a serious disease, the itching it causes may be very bothersome indeed. Lice are highly contagious, just like colds, so it's up to you to prevent head lice from being transmitted to friends or family members.

Read this brochure carefully. Every detail is important.

You can find further useful information at www.kopflaus.info – this is probably the most helpful information portal on head lice and head lice infestation.

If you have any further questions about the treatment of head lice infestation, please ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Your team from InfectoPharm and Pädia

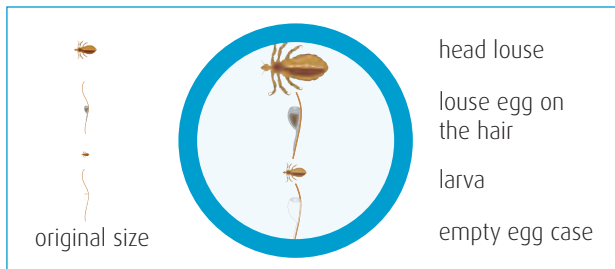


Important facts about the head louse

What do head lice look like?

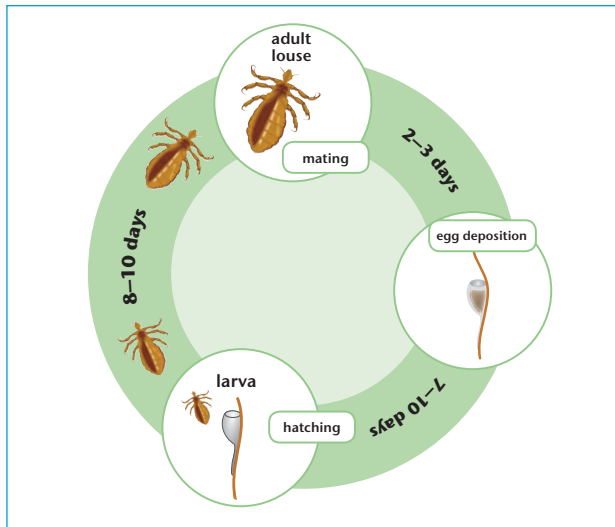
Adult head lice are approximately 3 mm long, grey or light-brown insects with flattened bodies and 6 legs. Using the claws on their legs, they can attach themselves firmly to the hair and crawl about nimbly.

In contrast to many other insects, head lice have no wings and can neither fly nor jump. As a rule, head lice only live in the hair on the scalp.



Following head lice infestation, adult lice, lice eggs, larvae and empty egg cases are found on the head.

Head lice subsist only on human blood. Using their mouth parts, they bite into the skin of the scalp and suck. Their saliva contains an anaesthetic substance that penetrates the wound, so that the bite initially goes unnoticed. Subsequently, however, approximately 20% of those infested experience unpleasant itching. Head lice do not, however, spread any diseases.



Life cycle of the head louse

How does a head louse develop?

Head lice attach their eggs to the hair near the scalp with a water-insoluble, glue-like substance. The eggs are dark blobs, approximately 1 mm in size, which stick firmly to the hair. After 7-10 days, the larvae, approximately 1 mm in size, hatch out. The empty white egg cases (nits) remain in the hair and gradually move outwards away from the scalp as the hair grows. In contrast to dandruff, nits cannot be removed by normal combing of the hair. After 8-10 days the larvae have developed into adult lice and can lay eggs themselves.

Transmission routes

How are head lice spread?

Lice have adapted very well to the conditions prevalent on human heads. The larvae require a steady temperature of 28–30°C to develop. Head lice that are removed from the host starve within 2–3 days at the latest. They therefore only leave their habitat, the scalp, to climb onto a new head.

Head lice are usually spread from person to person by close contact. This requires hair-to-hair contact, as lice cannot jump or fly. Only adult head lice are capable of travelling from one head to another. The larvae are not yet mobile enough.

Where can I catch head lice?

As lice are only spread directly through hair-to-hair contact, cuddly toys, articles of clothing and other objects do not play a role here. The risk of infection is always present when heads come into close contact, such as when children are playing together at kindergarten and school.

The eggs of lice are firmly attached to the hair and cannot be transferred to another head. They cease to develop on hairs that have fallen off the head. Head louse infestations are thus not transmitted by lice eggs.

Where do head lice come from?

If your child develops head lice, this means there must be children or adults in the vicinity who also have or have had lice. They may not yet know anything about this, as lice sometimes remain undiscovered for months. Be diplomatic, therefore, when investigating the source of infection.

Can lice be spread by animals?

Head lice have adapted so well to humans that they cannot survive on animals. There is therefore no risk of infection from animals.

Unnoticed, head lice crawl from one head to the next



Treatment (I)

What is the right method?

Nowadays, head lice are treated with a combination of effective head lice products and “the wet combing method”:

Treatment day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Suitable head lice treatment	X								X				
Comb through with hair wet	X				X				X				X

Check again on day 17 by combing through wet hair.

General treatment programme according to the recommendations of the RKI (Robert Koch Institute)

Choice of product

Apply an effective head louse preparation (see p. 10) immediately after discovering the lice. Follow the instructions in the package leaflet exactly. To eliminate the infestation entirely, the treatment must be repeated on day 8, 9 or 10. This ensures that the last larvae to hatch will be exposed to the treatment before they can develop sufficiently to lay eggs themselves.

The wet combing method

In addition, you should regularly comb through the wet hair with a nit comb, firstly to remove lice, larvae and nits and

secondly to achieve an overview of the stage of head louse infestation. For this purpose, a nit comb with long, stable metal teeth is best, such as the InfectoPedicul nit comb.

What are the advantages of “alternative” methods?

Sometimes one hears of “alternative” methods for treating a head lice infestation. Perhaps you, too, have been advised to use hot air with a hair dryer or to visit the sauna. Despite frequent assertions, none of these remedies is effective against head lice! On the contrary, some of these methods can seriously harm the scalp. On no account, therefore, should you trust the many household remedies that are supposed to help against head lice!



Treatment (II)

What products are available to treat head lice?

Two groups of preparations are available for treatment of head lice as recommended by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the authority responsible for fighting infectious diseases. These include, for example, drugs and agents that envelop and asphyxiate the lice.



With the proper information, the head lice infestation is over quickly

1. Medically active head lice products

The active substances in these preparations attack the nervous system of the lice and kill them. While they show toxic effects on lice, these active substances, e.g. permethrin in InfectoPedicul, are tolerated well by humans. The relevant market authorisations confirm their efficacy and tolerability. InfectoPedicul has been tried and tested as an anti-head louse product for many years.

2. Products that suffocate the head lice

Most of the preparations in this group contain silicone oils (so-called dimethicones). These silicone oils envelop the lice, penetrate into the respiratory openings and asphyxiate them. The available preparations use different types of dimethicones. The most important difference is the exposure time required for efficacy. Some of these oily agents must remain on the hair for many hours or overnight. The preparation Dimet 20 requires only 20 minutes of exposure time before it is washed out again. Besides silicone oil, it contains an additional substance that attacks the shell of the louse.

Which product should I choose?

The RKI recommends both drugs and asphyxiants as strategies of equal value in treatment of a head louse infestation.

You can't go wrong with the preparations from the head louse experts at InfectoPharm:

- > InfectoPedicul – pharmacologically effective against head lice
- > Dimet 20 – duration of exposure only 20 minutes.

Ask your physician/paediatrician which therapy he or she recommends in your case!

Further measures

What further measures are advisable?

In order to eradicate head lice completely, it is most important to examine and treat heads thoroughly and to comb out the lice eggs.

It is also important to inform the persons with whom you have direct contact. This is the only way all potential sources of infestation can be eliminated.

Wash bed linen, clothing worn during treatment and the towels used once at a temperature hotter than 50°C. No louse will survive this temperature in the washing machine. Laundry items that cannot be washed this hot can be placed in a plastic sack for 3 days to starve any lice on them.



Which measures are superfluous?

Head lice only live on human heads. They do not crawl into clothes or bed linen to await new victims. Without regular nourishment, they starve to death after 2–3 days.

Head lice cannot be effectively eliminated by excessive cleaning measures! Neither washing all the clothes in the wardrobe nor deep-freezing all of your children's soft toys will help at all! Such measures only cause unnecessary stress in the family.

The lice are still there! What did I do wrong?

- > Other people in your immediate vicinity are often infested. Treat all of them simultaneously.
- > Make sure that you treat the hair with a sufficient amount of the product. Observe the recommended contact times.
- > Make sure that you perform a second treatment on day 9 (± 24 h) of the treatment period. This is the only way to ensure that the head lice infestation is completely eradicated.

Re-admission

To whom must I report head lice infestation?

The Infection Protection Act obligates parents to report an infestation of head lice in their child to the relevant kindergarten/day care centre or school, the director of which will then report the case to the Health Office. A collective decision will then be reached on what measures are to be taken to fight the louse infestation. Above all, this includes informing all of the parents so that the lice infestation can be treated in all families.

Remember that the head lice infestation can only be contained if you report it. The nuisance of lice infestation will only stop if all affected children are treated!

When may my child return to kindergarten or school?

Every kindergarten and school determines for itself the conditions under which a child can be re-admitted. This can be a medical certificate from the doctor, for instance, or confirmation from the parents of treatment with a head lice product.

A single treatment with a suitable head louse agent is sufficient to kill all adult lice – i.e. the only lice that can be transmitted to others. Therefore, most kindergartens and schools are satisfied when the parents confirm that they have carried out the treatment.

If this has been done, the child may return to kindergarten or school on the day after the treatment! This presupposes,

however, that the parents will carry out the second treatment after 8–10 days.

Old, empty egg cases (nits) are not a reason to prohibit a child from attending school or kindergarten. These no longer pose any risk.



Unrecognised head lice carriers are the source of endless lice outbreaks at schools and kindergartens



We hope that this brochure has given you useful tips about how you can successfully combat the head lice infestation.

If you have any further questions – you can find more information here:

www.kopflaus.info: With lots of information about head lice infestation.

This leaflet has been made available to you by:

Surgery/pharmacy stamp

Note: The contents of this leaflet are for information purposes only and cannot replace professional medical advice under any circumstances. If you have any specific questions, please consult a doctor.

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