

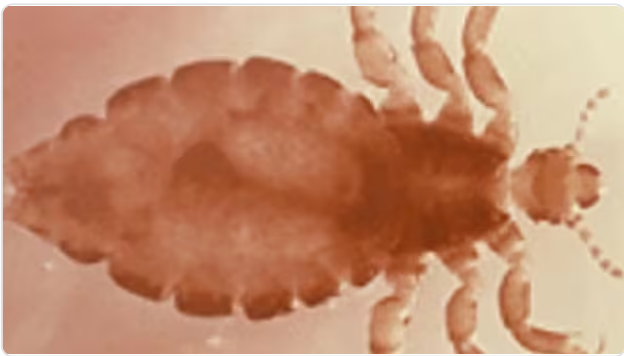


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About Lice

KEY POINTS

- Lice are parasitic insects found on people's heads and bodies.
- Lice spread by close person-to-person contact.
- The three types of lice affecting humans are head, body, and pubic.
- Both over the counter and prescription medications can treat lice.



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[Health Care Providers](#)

Overview

Lice are parasites, or insects, found on people's heads and bodies, including the pubic area. Human lice survive by feeding on human blood. Infestation or infested person means that a person has lice.

Types

There are different types of lice on areas of the body. The three types of lice that live on humans are:

- Head louse (*Pediculus humanus capitis*)
- Body or clothes louse (*Pediculus humanus corporis*)
- Pubic or "crab" louse (*Phthirus pubis*)

Only the body louse can spread disease.

How it spreads

You get lice (head, body, and pubic) from close person-to-person contact with someone who has a lice infestation. Dogs, cats, and other pets do not carry or spread human lice. Lice move by crawling; they cannot hop or fly.

Treatment

You can treat lice infestations with both over-the-counter and prescription medications.

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

[National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases \(NCEZID\)](#)