

## Head lice

Head louse is a human parasite that feeds by sucking blood from the scalp and reproduces by laying eggs. Louse bites cause severe itching of the scalp, which usually raises the suspicion of lice. Anyone can get head lice, and it is not a sign of bad hygiene.

### Transmission

Head lice are transmitted through direct contact between people, as well as through combs, brushes and headgear.

### Treatment

You look for head lice by combing the hair with a lice comb available at pharmacies. The lice are most commonly found in the neck and behind the ears. The hair of each family member is examined carefully. Eggs are removed from the scalp with a lice comb. Pharmacies have self-care products available for washing your hair and scalp. All family members are not automatically treated, but all infected people are treated at the same time. The success of the treatment is checked with a lice comb, and if necessary, the treatment is repeated.

There is no need for a major clean-up at home, as lice die quickly outside the body. Items in contact with the head, such as hairbrushes, beanies, pillowcases and towels are washed. Items that cannot be washed are removed from use for 48 hours. Lice are killed in five minutes in temperatures above 55°C.

The infection is reported to close contacts as well as the child's daycare or school. There is no need to be absent from daycare or school once treatment has been started. Beanies and scarves are kept in the sleeve of one's own jacket.

More instructions on the website of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) [Päättäi - THL](#) and the Health Library (Terveyskirjasto) [Päättäit - Terveyskirjasto](#)

See also Infections and Daycare in the Health Library  
<https://www.terveyskirjasto.fi/dlk01200>