

Vital knowledge about the life-cycle

- A head louse usually hatches 7 to 10 days after the egg is laid (sometimes 5 to 11 days).
- A newly-hatched head louse becomes full-grown in a minimum of 6 days.
- Full-grown head lice move from head to head; younger lice tend to stay on the head where they hatch.
- Full-grown lice mate and the female starts laying eggs, at the earliest on day 7 after she herself hatched.

Breaking the life-cycle

Preventing head lice from spreading: it is critical to remove the lice before the sixth day from hatching

Preventing head lice from reproducing: a new generation of eggs can be laid from day seven after hatching

No treatment can guarantee complete egg-kill

With a double dose treatment, applied on day 1 and a week later (day 8) **the three risks** are that:

1. Lice hatch from eggs directly after the first application and reach adulthood before the second application, so they can spread and lay eggs.
2. Lice may continue to hatch till day 11 after the first application, which is 3 days after the second application!
3. New full-grown lice, caught from other heads between applications will lay more eggs.

Inform yourself what a treatment entails before you choose one

If you get your treatment product from a pharmacy, ask the pharmacist to go through the instructions with you. *If you buy off-the-shelf,* read the information on the pack to find out how many applications per infested head are required.

Remember that whatever information is on the pack, **you *always* have to check for lice on days 5 and 12/13 and remove them, to avoid the 3 risks of continuing infestation.**