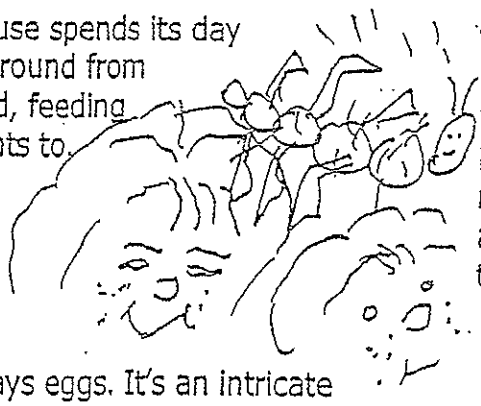
LIFE CYCLE OF A HEAD Llouse

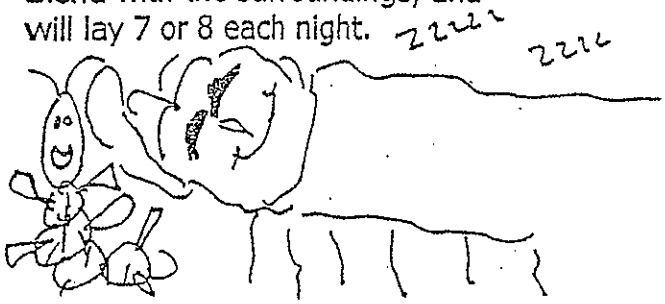
TRANSFER
The head louse spends its day wandering around from head to head, feeding where it wants to.



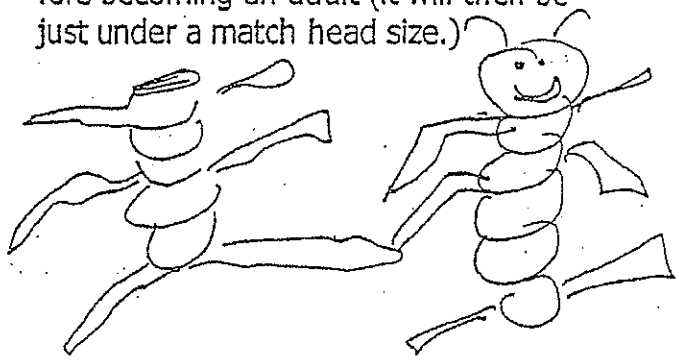
FIRST DRINK
The newly hatched, colourless louse has its first feed and its body can be seen filling up with blood. It pierces the skin with its mouthparts and couples to a capillary, meanwhile pumping in local anaesthetic and anticoagulant. The louse feeds five times a day.



LAY EGGS
The female lays eggs. It's an intricate task, this, glueing an egg to a hair, very near or touching the scalp to keep it warm. She usually does this at night, when her host is still. She tries to make it blend with the surroundings, and will lay 7 or 8 each night.

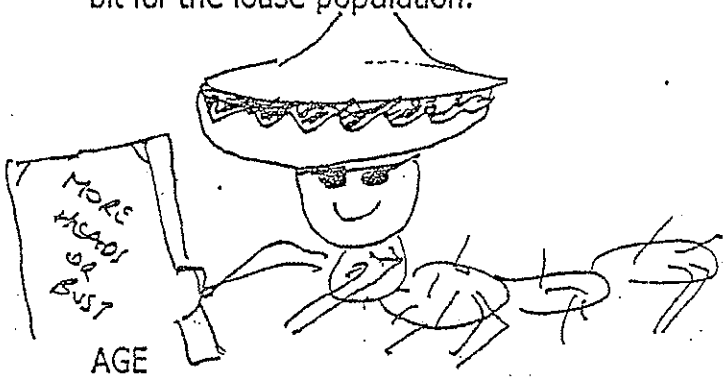


MOULTING
The young louse moults three times before becoming an adult (it will then be just under a match head size.)

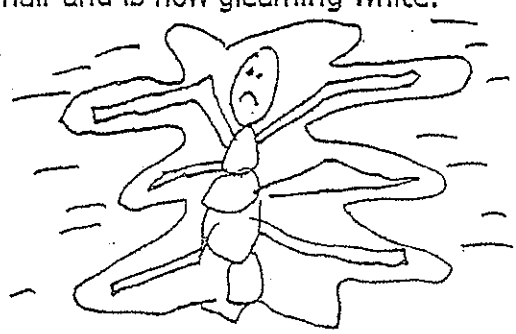


MATING
The female usually mates between laying each egg. As females outnumber males 4 to 1, father louse's night work is demanding.

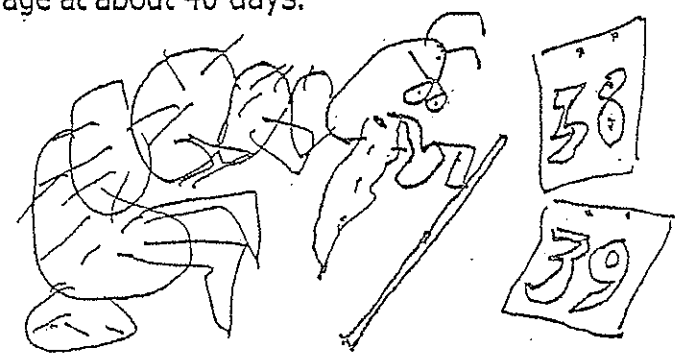
OPPORTUNITY
Now an adult, the louse wants to travel from head to head and have a good time. Never missing an opportunity of doing its bit for the louse population.



HATCHING
Each egg takes 7-10 days to hatch. When the louse is ready to hatch, the plug at the end of the egg is too small, when removed for the louse to get out. So it gulps air passes it through its body until, under pressure, it pops out of the egg.
The empty egg shell (the nit) is left on the hair and is now gleaming white.



AGE
If if survives all of that - it will die of old age at about 40 days.



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Dear Parents

Head lice are a very common problem affecting an estimated 1 in 10 primary children every year. As some children may suffer head lice on several occasions, there is understandably concern from parents. We have been given advice from Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust and The Education Department, Winchester, on how to tackle this problem.

Parents often request a return to 'nit nurse' inspections. Unfortunately, inspecting dry hair only reveals the worse cases so most cases go undetected. Any inspection is only as good as the day on which it is carried out, the situation could be just the same a few weeks later if children get reinfected from another family member.

It is important to be aware that head lice are usually a community wide problem, rather than just a school problem. As lice can spread round family members, treating all the children in school won't solve the problem. Some cases of head lice have been reported recently so please could we all take extra care with:

CHECKING CHILDREN'S HAIR

Although the lice can be seen in dry hair, the best way to check is by the combing of wet hair with a fine-toothed detector comb.

Dr Richard Gibb, Senior Clinical Medical Officer (Communicable Disease Control) has stated that, there may be treatment failures, so it is important that **regular twice daily combing of wet hair with a nit comb is maintained for at least 2 weeks.** This will ensure that any young and immature nymphs will be removed.

TREATING IF NECESSARY - THE WET COMBING METHOD

This is an alternative method to using lotions.

* Wash the hair in the normal way with an ordinary shampoo.
* Using lots of hair conditioner and while the hair is very wet, comb through the hair from the roots with a fine-toothed comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with every stroke and do this over a pale surface, such as a paper towel or the bath.
* Clear the comb of lice between each stroke.
* Wet lice find it difficult to escape and hair, which is slippery from conditioner, makes it hard for them to keep a grip - so removal with a comb is easier.
* **If you find any lice then repeat this routine every 3-4 days for 2 weeks, so that any lice emerging from eggs are removed before they spread.**
* If you continue to have infestations of lice after 2 weeks of wet combing it is advisable to seek advice.medical

Thank you all for your co-operation and perseverance with this problem.

Yours sincerely

Ginene Evans
Headteacher

Healthy School

Hampshire County Council