

Pest Profile



Photo credit: James Gathany, Frank Collins, Ph.D, USDCDCP

Common Name: Body Louse

Scientific Name: *Pediculus humanus humanus*, also known as (*Pediculus humanus corporis*)

Order and Family: Phthiraptera: (Anoplura) Pediculidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	0.8 mm	Oblong with end cap, glued to clothing or occasionally body hair. Egg is tan if occupied, transparent if empty.
Larva/Nymph	1 mm – 2.5 mm	Transparent, tan or reddish if full of blood
Adult	2.5 – 3 mm	Flattened, wingless, greyish to dark if empty, reddish if full of blood, tan to brown if meal digested.
Pupa (if applicable)		

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Piercing-sucking

Host/s: Humans

Description of Medical Importance (Nymphs and adults): Ectoparasites, feed on human blood. Vector of *Rickettsia prowazekii*, which causes epidemic typhus. (Gray, 1998)(Anderson & Anderson 2000)

References:

Buxton, P. A. 1947. "The biology of *Pediculus humanus*". *The Louse; an account of the lice which infest*

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Gray, M. W., 11/ 1998. ["Rickettsia, typhus and the mitochondrial connection"](#). *Nature*. **396** (6707): 109–10. doi:[10.1038/24030](#). PMID [9823885](#)

Andersson J. O., Andersson S.G., March 2000. ["A century of typhus, lice and Rickettsia"](#). *Res. Microbiol.* **151** (2): 143–50. doi:[10.1016/s0923-2508\(00\)00116-9](#). PMID [10865960](#).

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