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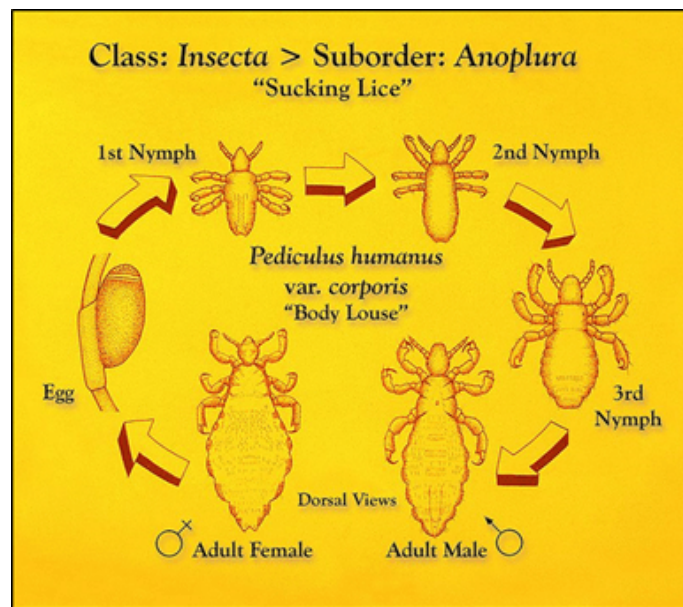
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### Lice Life Cycle: Introduction to Lice, Stages in the Lice Life Cycle, the Egg (For CBSE, ICSE, IAS, NET, NRA 2022)

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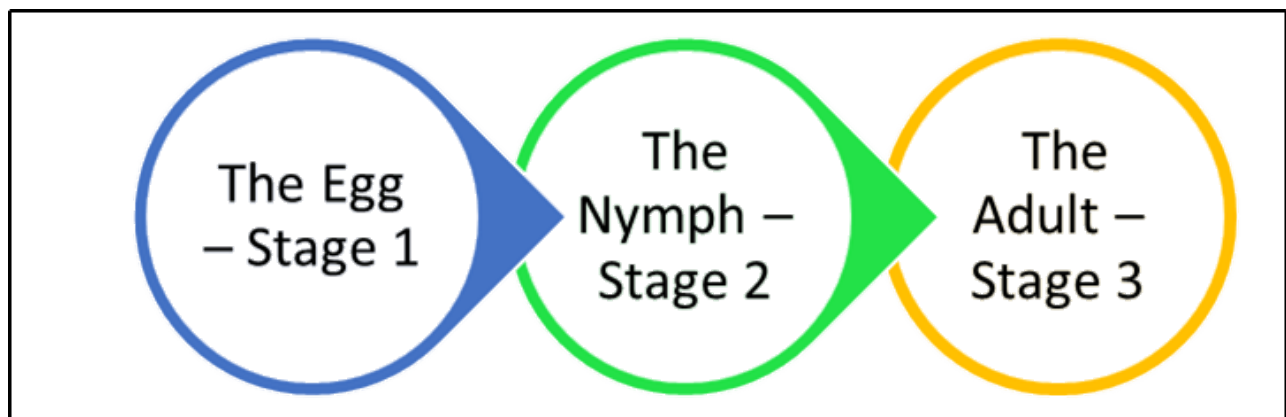
#### **Introduction to Lice**

- Louse (plural: lice) is the common name for members of the order Phthiraptera.
- Lice were ubiquitous in human society until at least the middle ages.
- They contain 5,000 species of wingless insect.
- They are obligate parasites living externally on warm-blooded hosts.
- This includes every species of bird and mammal, except for monotremes, pangolins, and bats.
- They are vectors of diseases such as typhus.



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## Life Cycle Stages



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## Stage 1

### The Egg

- The eggs are tiny particles and known as nits.
- The egg can measure up to 0.8 mm, oval-shaped and yellow or white colored.
- It takes around one week at least for the egg to hatch into nymphs.

## Stage 2

### The Nymph

- Lice undergo three stages of moulting.
- These are the tiny versions of lice.
- It is yellow to white colored.

## Stage 3

### The Adult

- The adult lice measure up to 2 mm in length.
- The life span of adult lice is 30 days that too if it is fed frequent blood meals on a regular basis.

## Evolution

### Anoplura

- Sucking lice
- Occurring on mammals exclusively.

### Rhynchophthirina

Parasites of elephants and warthogs.

## Ischnocera

- Mostly avian chewing lice.
- One family parasitizes mammals.

## Amblycera

- A primitive suborder of chewing lice.
- Widespread on birds.
- They live on South American and Australian mammals as well.

## Other Important Points

- Humans host two species of louse namely the head louse and the body louse.
- The body louse has the smallest genome of any known insect.

### Chewing lice:

- Live among the hairs or feathers of their host.
- Feed on skin and debris.

### Sucking lice:

- Pierce the host's skin.
- Feed on blood and other secretions.

They usually spend their whole life on a single host.

### Colour of the Lice:

- Usually cryptically colored.
  - To match the fur or feathers of the host.
  - Colour varies from pale beige to dark grey.

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