

LICE

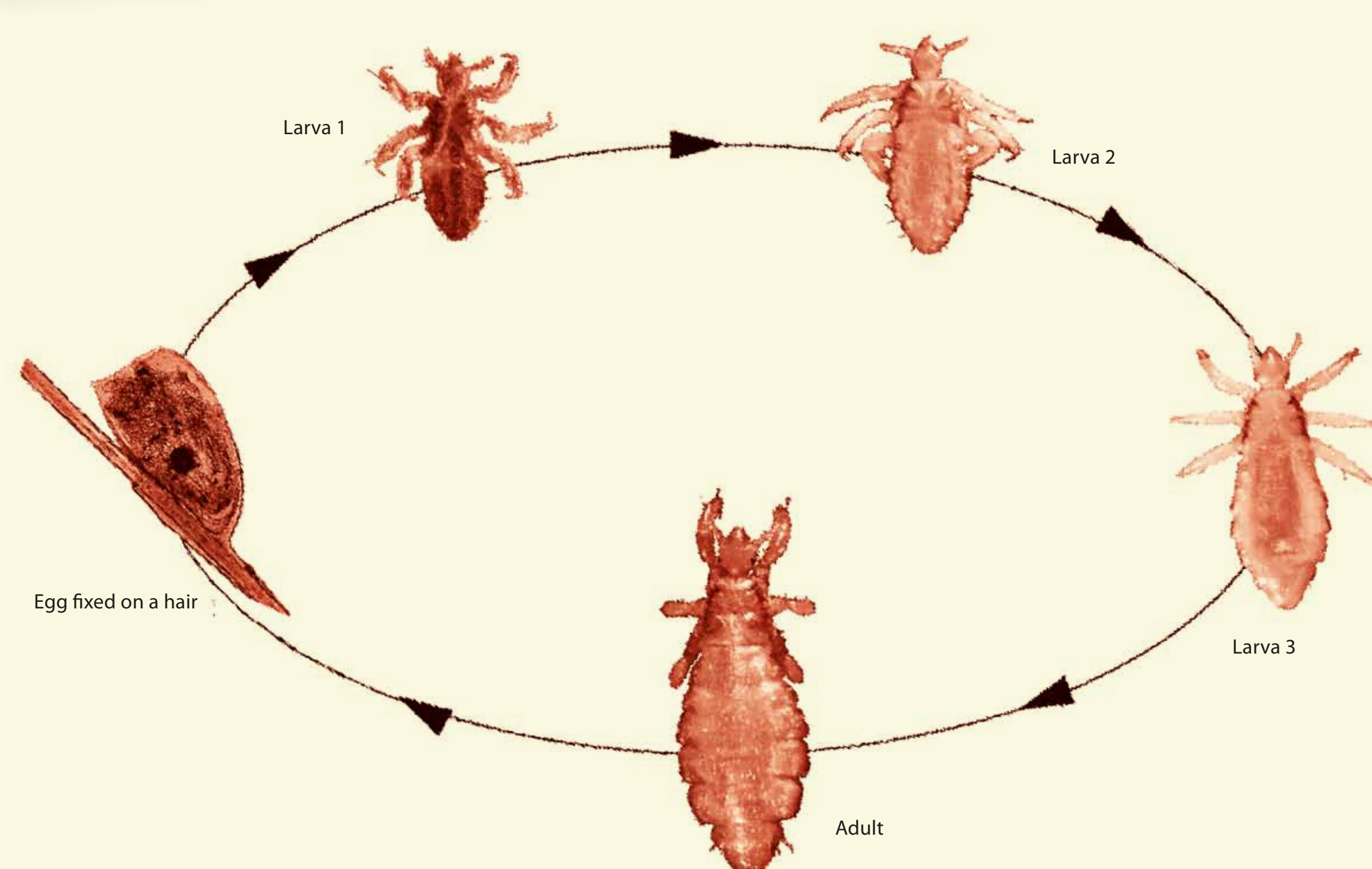
typhus

Name *Pediculus humanus corporis*
Length **2 mm**
Longevity as a biting parasite **5 weeks**
Special feature **related to sanitary conditions**



Biology of the vector

Among the **550 louse species** found as parasites in the fur of **mammals**, **two live only on human beings**: the famous 'crab' or pubic louse and two forms of the same species, one of which targets hair and the other is found in body hair.



Geographic distribution

World distribution of lice

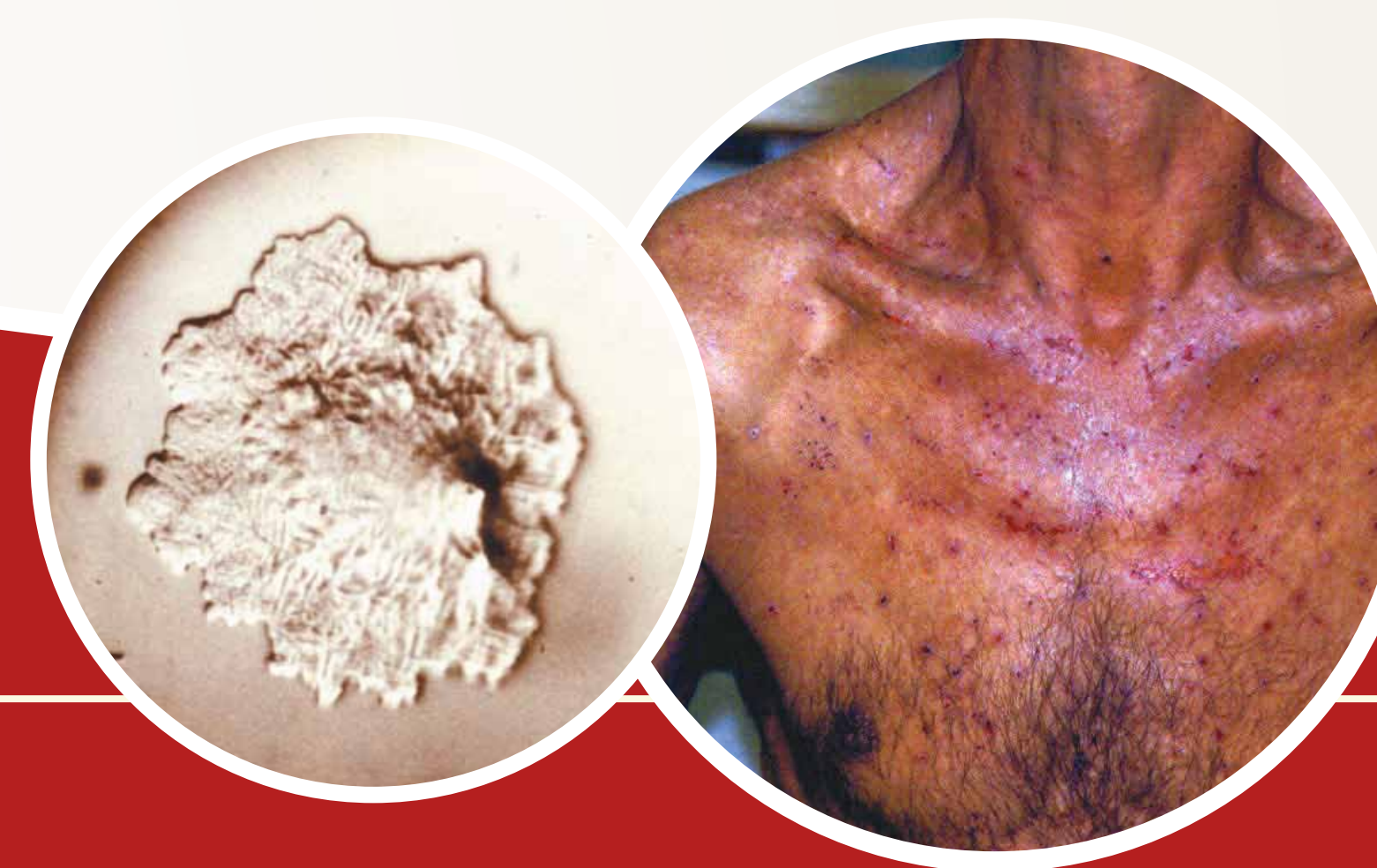


Head and body lice are **distributed worldwide**.
The second is often seen in **mountainous regions in the tropics**.
In **temperate countries**, they affect people **living in precarious sanitary conditions**.
Public lice are **dwindling**.

Vector transmission

In contrast with other species, **body lice are vectors** for infectious agents. They carry **bacteria that cause epidemic typhus or trench fever**.
Lice ingest bacteria with the blood of sick persons and **spread them in their excrement**.
They enter the body via bite wounds, scratching or contact with ocular mucous membrane.

Trench fever probably affected **more than a million persons** during World War 1 and **typhus** has caused **more deaths than the sum of deaths in all wars**.
Today there are serious epidemics in **refugee camps** during wars or following natural catastrophes.



Prevention and control

Preventive or curative measures must be planned:

- Apply measures for **bodily hygiene**
- Treat infested persons and clothes with **insecticides**
- Use **antibiotics** in case of infection



Body lice cannot survive for more than 48 hours when separated from their host