

Head Lice Facts & Treatment

Head lice is a parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people. They feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp. Head lice are not known to spread disease.

How is it spread? Head to head contact with an already infested person is the most common way to get head lice. Head to head contact is common during play at school, home and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, or camp).

Uncommonly head lice may be spread by sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice or nits (eggs of the louse) may have crawled or fallen such as sharing clothing or articles recently worn or used by an infested person.

Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. If your child contracts head lice there is no cause for embarrassment or undue anxiety. By the same token, if someone in your child's class at school develops head lice, there is no reason to automatically assume you child will "catch" head lice.

How is head lice infestation diagnosed? It is best made by finding a live nymph or adult louse on the scalp or hair. Because they are small and move quickly they can be difficult to find. Use of a magnifying lens and comb may be helpful to find lice. If crawling lice are not seen, finding nits firmly attached within ¼ inch of the base of the hair shaft strongly suggest, but does not confirm, that a person is infested and should be treated. Nits that are attached more than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft are almost always dead or already hatched. Nits are often confused with things like dandruff, hair spray droplets, and dirt particles.

Treatment: Follow directions of over-the-counter or prescription medication used. **Do Not Use** a crème rinse, combination shampoo/condition or condition before using lice medication. Do not re-wash hair for 1-2 days after the lice medicine is removed. Nit combs should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft.

After treatment check the hair and comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.

Most shampoos require retreatment in 7-10 days. Follow directions on packaging.

Supplemental Measures: Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. You don't need to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities.

- ❑ Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using hot water (130) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- ❑ Soak combs and brushes in hot water (130 degrees) for 5-10 minutes.
- ❑ Vacuum the floor and furniture particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However the risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a rug or carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed: nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the human scalp. Spending much time and money on

- ❑ housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid re-infestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.
- ❑ Do no use fumigant sprays.

Students may return to school after appropriate treatment is started.

If you are unsure how to detect head lice, have head lice that have reoccurred or have questions about head lice contact your school nurse.

Taken from the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/lice/head

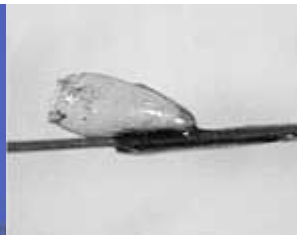
For more information visit:

www.cdc.gov/lice/head

www.nasn.org S.C.R.A.T.C.H. campaign



Nit



Empty Nit Shell



Adult Lice and a Nit