

Head Lice

Head lice infestation is a common problem among people. Although it is annoying, the condition does not transmit serious disease.

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

- Very small (less than 1/8 inch) insects (parasites) without wings that live on the human head
- Eggs (NITS) are laid on hair shaft close to scalp
- NITS can be gray, white or brown and are firmly attached to hair shaft with glue-like substance
- NITS hatch in about 8 days

WHO GETS HEAD LICE?

- **ANYONE**
- Pets cannot get or carry Head Lice

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Itching and scratching of the scalp and neck
- Feels like something “crawling” in hair
- May be sores from constant scratching
- May see Lice
- **NITS** attached to hair shaft (Try removing the specks from the hair shaft; if they are easily removed, chances are these are **not NITS.**)

HOW ARE HEAD LICE SPREAD?

- Person-to-person by direct head contact
- Sharing personal items (combs, brushes, towels, linens, hats, scarves, hair accessories or other clothing)
- Head lice cannot fly or jump—they only crawl

Guidelines for What to Do if Someone Gets Head Lice

1) TREAT USING OVER-THE-COUNTER LICE-KILLING TREATMENTS

- Many are on the market, including pyrethrin products (i.e., Rid, A-200, Triple X, Clear, R&C) and permethrin products (i.e., Nix).
- These shampoos only kill the lice, not the eggs/nits.
- Follow the package directions for using these products; directions can be different from product to product.
- It can take several hours for the lice to die after the treatment.
- **Follow directions about retreatment (7-10 days later); do not retreat sooner or more often than recommended.**
- Contact your health care provider with questions including the use of prescription treatments.



2) HAIR COMBING AND NIT REMOVAL

Removing the NITS is the key to getting rid of the LICE and preventing their return.

- Separate hair into smaller sections to comb after the treatment.
- Gently comb hair with a special nit-removal comb.
- Depending on how thick and long the hair is, it may take 1-2 hours to comb.
- Wash towels used and clothing worn during NIT combing.
- Follow 14-day Lice Treatment Plan.



3) CHECK OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD FOR LICE

- Look for NITS firmly attached to hair shafts, near the scalp, especially at the neck hairline and behind the ears.
- You may see NITS more easily than LICE because lice move so fast

Only members of the household with LICE or NITS should be treated.

4) WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?

- After he/she has been treated, he/she can return to school.
- Please call your school health office or your health care provider with any questions.

5) CLEANING PROCEDURES

CAUTION: *Do not use any of the below items until they have been thoroughly cleaned.*

- Wash used combs, brushes, hats, hoods, hair accessories in **HOT, soapy water EACH DAY**
- Wash and dry pillowcases, sheets, blankets, night clothes, towels, stuffed animals and clothes worn last three days. Use **HOT** water; then dry on **HIGH** heat.
- **If above items cannot be washed/dried, dry clean or bag for two weeks.**
- **Vacuum child’s car-seat cover.**
- **All the above must be done before treated individual uses these items again.**

