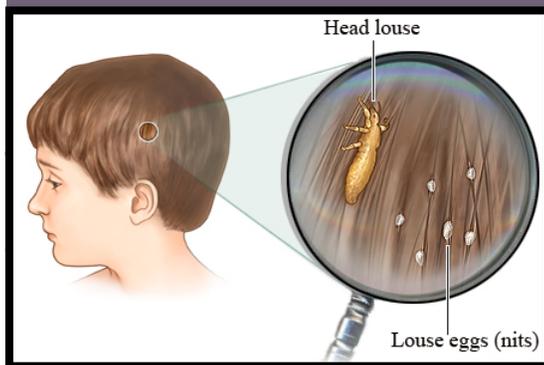


What are head lice?

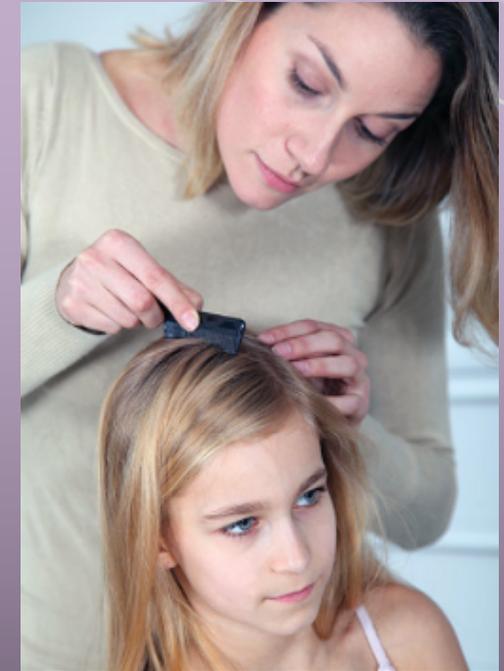
Head lice are tiny, wing-less insects that live close to the human scalp. They feed on human blood. An adult louse is the size of a sesame seed. Baby lice, or nymphs, are even smaller. Nits are the tiny, teardrop-shaped lice eggs. They attach to the hair shaft, often found around the nape of the neck or the ears. Nits can look similar to dandruff, but cannot be easily removed or brushed off.



Prevent the Spread

Head lice do not survive long if they fall off the host and cannot feed. Avoid re-infestation and spread to others by following these steps:

1. Soak combs, brushes, and hair accessories in hot water for 5-10 minutes or discard.
2. Machine wash and dry all clothing, linens and other items worn by the infested person during the 2 days prior to treatment. Use hot water and high heat. Items that cannot be washed may be dry-cleaned. Non-washable items (e.g., stuffed animals) can be sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
3. Vacuum floor, furniture, and car seats. Spending much time and money on housecleaning is unnecessary, as the risk of becoming infested by a louse that has fallen off the host is small.
4. Do not use fumigant sprays.



HEAD LICE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT HEAD LICE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.d64.org > Departments
> Health Services > Health & Safety Tips



FACTS ABOUT HEAD LICE

- ❖ Head lice do not transmit disease, but can spread easily.
- ❖ Head lice move by crawling – they cannot jump or fly!
- ❖ Live lice can be difficult to find. They avoid light and move quickly!
- ❖ Dogs, cats, and other pets do not play a role in transmission of head lice.
- ❖ The life span of an adult louse on a host ranges up to 30 days. The female head louse can deposit about 90 eggs. The nits (eggs) hatch in 7-10 days, and in another 10 days, they are mature adults and the cycle begins over.
- ❖ Off the host, adult lice typically live 1-2 days. Nits can survive off the host longer, but this happens rarely, since they are “glued” to the hair shaft.
- ❖ Other facts can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

How are lice spread?

Head lice are mainly spread by direct head-to-head contact. Less commonly, they can be transferred indirectly among clothing items, when combs, brushes, or hair accessories are shared, or when infested towels, bedding, hat, helmets, etc. are shared.

Head lice do not jump or fly. They infest people of all socioeconomic levels, without regard for age, race, sex, or standards of personal hygiene. Animals are not a source of human lice.



Signs and Symptoms

The most common signs and symptoms of head lice are a tickling feeling on the scalp or in the hair, itching that is caused by the bites of the louse, irritability and difficulty sleeping, and sores on the head caused by scratching.

Checking for Lice

Seat your child in a brightly lit room. Part the hair in small sections, examining the scalp. Nits look like small whitish or yellow-brown specks, and are firmly attached to the hair shaft, unlike dandruff. Live lice move quickly, crawling away from light. Comb through the entire head of hair in small sections, using a fine-toothed comb.

A positive diagnosis of an active case can only be made by finding a live louse. Nits can remain on the hair for months, but do not indicate active infestation.

Treatment

Step 1: Kill the lice

Over-the-counter treatments come in a variety of forms: shampoo, gel, cream rinse, and mousse. Ask your pediatrician for a recommendation.

Follow the directions on the box carefully. A second treatment in 7-10 days is usually necessary to kill all the eggs.

Step 2: Comb out /remove the nits

This is a tedious and time-consuming step, but will help prevent re-infestation from any eggs that may not have been killed. Comb through your child's hair in small sections. Examine hair strands closely for nits. To remove nits, grasp the egg between thumb and forefinger, dragging it off the hair strand. Some products include a fine-toothed comb.

Step 3: Continue to check your child daily for 2 weeks after treatment.