

Lice Facts

Transmission

Transmission is mainly acquired by direct head to head contact. Transfer by inanimate objects is possible, but not likely, as lice cannot live very long off of the scalp. Despite this fact, it is not a good idea to share combs, brushes, hats, headbands, etc. Please remind your child of this rule.

How to Check for Nits and Lice

Find a comfortable location in good lighting (near natural sunlight is very helpful). Part the hair into small sections and look closely at the hair shaft near the scalp. Nits will be glued to the hair at an angle, are firmly attached and take a lot of effort to pull off, whereas dandruff and other debris can be easily blown off or moved. It is very helpful to have a piece of white paper or a white bowl handy to deposit a suspected nit into for better identification. Nits are most commonly found behind the ears, near the base of the neck and at the crown of the head. Live lice can be very fast moving and difficult to find.

Treating Lice

If you find lice or nits within ¼ inch of the scalp, please treat your child using an over-the-counter product available at any pharmacy. The leading cause of treatment failure is improper use of products, so please read instructions carefully. If you have lice and are pregnant or nursing, please contact your doctor.

After treatment, please comb the hair, using a nit comb, for a week to ten days, to remove nits. This is the most important activity in lice treatment. Combing thoroughly and picking nits takes lots of time. Take a thin section of hair that is no wider than the comb and if you find a nit, grasp it with your thumb and forefinger fingernails and deposit onto a tissue. Dispose of the tissue in a plastic bag. Once you have thoroughly combed the first section, pin it up and move to another small section, working until you combed the whole head. Treatment may have to be repeated in 7-10 days if the package insert directs you to, or if you find more lice and nits within ¼ inch of the scalp.

The day you treat the hair, wash bed linens, towels, pajamas and any special items your child may like to sleep with in hot water (130 degrees) and dry at high temperatures. Vacuum rugs, carpets, upholstered furniture, pillows, bed mattresses, car seats; wash coats, scarves, hats and mittens, washable rugs, sheets, blankets, and pillowcases. Soak combs, brushes and hair accessories in hot water for 10 minutes. Also please alert the school nurse if your student has nits or lice. No student name will ever be shared with faculty, staff, or students.

What is lice?

Lice are human parasitic insects, about the size of a sesame seed, that live on the scalp and lay eggs in the hair. Lice live about 30 days and lay about 6 eggs/day and cement these eggs (nits) on hair shafts. Lice are not known to carry disease and therefore are not a health hazard. They have nothing to do with the cleanliness of the home and actually prefer clean heads.

Lice are fast crawling and range in color from translucent to almost totally black. Head lice may cause itching, but a lot of the time there are no symptoms. The first infestation may produce NO signs or symptoms for 4-6 weeks. **Please keep in mind that lice are a nuisance and aggravating but they do not transmit any disease.**

What is a nit?

Nits are the eggs that lice lay. They are brown to white and about the size of a pencil dot or period. Eggs within ¼ inch of the scalp are considered to be alive. Eggs take about 8-10 days to hatch out and then another 8-10 days to mature to lice.

Additional Info:

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

<http://www.headlice.org/faq/notnit.htm>

http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/common/head_lice.html

<http://pediatrics.about.com/od/headlice/ig/Head-Lice-Pictures/>