

Lice

HOW TO GUIDE FOR HEAD CHECKING AND TREATMENT



WHAT ARE THEY?

Head lice are small parasitic insects that live on the scalp of their human hosts. In adult form, they lay eggs called nits on the hair shafts and feed on human blood which can cause itching. Head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness and are not responsible for the spread of any disease.

WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

The bugs are very tiny (about the size of a sesame seed) and grayish brown or black in color. They don't hop or fly, but they do scurry very quickly, and it is often difficult to find them in the hair. More likely, if there is a lice infestation, you will find the eggs, also called nits. Nits within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the scalp usually indicate an active infestation. These are very tiny pearly white or clear eggs that are firmly attached to the hair shaft. They can be mistaken for dandruff or hair spray droplets, but they do not move off the hair shaft if brushed. They are often found in the hair at the crown of the head, behind the ears or at the nape of the neck, but can be anywhere

in the hair. You might also find nymphs, which are immature lice that have just hatched. These look like pepper on the scalp.



HOW DO YOU GET THEM?

How Do You Get Them?

Head lice transmission occurs when living lice, not nits, move from one person to another, mainly by direct head to head contact with an infested person. Inanimate objects serve a little role in the transmission of head lice. Although upholstered furniture can theoretically serve as a transmitter of lice, household items play a relatively small role in transmission. Bedding may play a role in transmission; however, transmission associated with a bed is more likely due to the direct contact during sleep by two individuals sharing the bed. Bed linens should be washed in hot water, mattresses can be vacuumed. It is also important to understand that furniture (including beds), carpets, rugs, and buildings do not become infested with lice. Lice cannot reproduce away from the human host.



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It is important to do a proper and thorough lice check on your kids once a week. This video shows you how.



HOW DO I GET RID OF THEM?

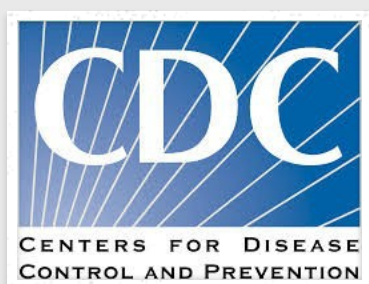
1. **USE A PEDICULICIDE (Lice-killing shampoo).** Read the label and follow directions carefully - different pediculicides are applied in different ways. Never use a pediculicide on an infant or anyone pregnant or breastfeeding. Shampoo over the sink, not the tub or shower. If stated in the directions, you may apply a second application of the pediculicide 8 to 10 days later to be sure all lice have been killed, but if two treatments do not get rid of the lice, do not apply another pediculicide product to your child's scalp. The lice may be resistant to the product. Instead, call your doctor. He or she may recommend a prescription alternative.
2. **CLEAN ENVIRONMENT.** Don't worry about turning your house upside-down in an effort to get rid of lice. Such efforts are unnecessary. Lice depend on human blood to survive and typically die within 24 hours without a host. Lice may, however, get caught in a hairbrush, comb or headband. Wash hair care items and accessories in hot water (130 degrees F). Likewise, lice may be trapped - for example, when towel-drying hair. Launder recently used clothes, towels, and bedding materials in hot water (130 degrees F) or tumble in a dryer on high heat. If your child sleeps with a special stuffed animal or blanket, wash it in hot water (130 degrees F), or place in a dryer on high heat. An alternative is to place the item in a plastic bag for a week or two. Routine cleaning is sufficient. Vacuum rugs, carpets, chairs and couches, pillows, bed mattresses, car seats; wash coats, scarves, hats and mittens, washable rugs, sheets, blankets, and pillowcases. Off the head, adult lice usually cannot survive for more than a day or two. Nits off the hair will die within hours of hatching if they cannot find a meal. So, there is no point in cleaning every nook and cranny. Pets do not carry human head lice. They do not need any special cleaning. Evidence shows that lice sprays for carpeting and upholstery are not effective or necessary for killing lice or nits.
3. **COMB OUT THE NITS. THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY IN LICE TREATMENT IS NITPICKING.** If lice show up again after you treat, it is usually because nits or newly hatched lice were not removed. Part out thin sections of hair (no wider than the comb). If you find a nit, grasp the nit with your thumb and forefinger fingernails and deposit onto a

towel or wet paper towel or tissue. Pinback each section of hair after removing the nits. After picking all the lice and nits you can see, rinse the hair with water to wash out any loose nits. **CHECK FOR LICE AND NITS AT LEAST DAILY FOR TWO WEEKS, EVEN IF YOU DO NOT SEE ANY! THEY ARE SMALL AND EASY TO MISS. IF YOU DO NOT CHECK FOR NITS AND LICE REGULARLY, NOTHING ELSE YOU DO WILL WORK!**

4.

Services To Treat Lice: Another option for treatment are companies that actually remove head lice and nits; you can find them by searching online for lice removal services in southern NJ.

<https://youtu.be/zY4Nvab6uLM>



WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

The Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses reached a common understanding and acknowledgment of the following principles:

- A head lice infestation is a mild health condition without serious health consequences for a child, and should not be considered as a major health threat to those infested or those potentially exposed.

- Head lice cannot be completely eliminated from communities or schools. Neither the occurrence of a case nor an outbreak should be considered as evidence of a breakdown in hygienic practices on the part of individuals, families, or schools.
 - The most effective point of control of head lice is the household. Parents are best suited to screen their children for head lice and to properly treat and control lice within the household.
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- School policies should reflect the mild nature of this health condition, the impracticality of total elimination, and the low risk of transmission by a child under treatment. Policies and practices should have the minimal disruptive effect on children's educational experiences and minimal stigmatizing impact on children.

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL DOING ABOUT LICE?

From the state of NJ Department of Health website:

What is the school's role in the prevention and control of head lice in children? Because a child with an active head lice infestation has likely had the infestation for a month or more by the time it is discovered, he or she should be allowed to remain in class, but be discouraged from close direct head contact with others. The child's parent or guardian should be notified of the infestation that day by telephone, or by a note sent home with the child at the end of the school day. The parent or guardian should be advised that prompt proper treatment is in the best interest of the child and his or her classmates.

It is a common perception that head lice "outbreaks" are usually associated with schools; however, community settings also play a significant role in the transmission of lice. Apparent school outbreaks probably reflect community-wide transmission of head lice, which is more readily recognized at the school where children congregate. Therefore, control efforts directed only at the school setting are unlikely to be successful.

Based on recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses, the schools in Collingswood and Oaklyn have adopted a "no-exclusion" strategy for dealing with head lice. A student with a suspected head lice infestation will be sent to the nurse. If live lice are found, the parent will be notified and advised that treatment with a pediculicidal (lice-killing) shampoo is recommended. A notice to parents of students in the same grade as the child with the infestation may be sent home. The school nurse may monitor for further signs of re-infestation. If only nits are found initially, the nurse may check the child again in a few days to detect any live lice; if found, the nurse will recommend to the parent at that point that treatment should be initiated. School-wide screenings will not be done. Studies demonstrate that screening for head lice in schools does not decrease the incidence of head lice and is not cost effective.

It is unfortunate that this condition still causes discomfort and embarrassment, but it is both a courtesy and a responsibility to let others who may have been infested know so that the problem can be contained. Talk to your child about not sharing hats, combs, hair items, dress-up clothes, etc. It is also a good idea to suspend any sleepovers until the problem is eradicated.



DISCLAIMER

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