



Head lice are small parasitic insects

- Head lice are about the size of a sesame seed and live on the human scalp, which is the only place they can survive. They are brownish, tan or gray in color and move by crawling.
- Lice do not jump or fly, and do not transmit diseases. They feed on human blood, and without it, they will not survive for more than two days.
- Lice eggs appear as tiny yellow, brown or tan dots. Lice lay eggs on hair shafts close to the scalp. Once hatched, the eggshells, called nits, usually remain glued to the hair shaft.

Persistent itching of the scalp is the most common symptom of lice¹

- Scratching behind the ears or the back of the neck is another possible sign.
- Itching is not always present.

Pediculosis (lice infestation) is a very common condition

- There are between 6 and 12 million cases of head lice each year.²
- Head lice are the second most common condition among children – second only to the common cold.³
- About 80 percent of schools across the country have at least one documented outbreak of head lice per year.⁴

Anyone can get head lice

- Pre-school and elementary aged children (those aged 3 to 12) are most commonly infested,² girls more frequently than boys.
- A lice infestation is not due to poor hygiene. In fact, lice prefer to live on clean heads.

Head lice spread easily by direct contact

- Head lice can be spread whenever there is direct contact between the head or hair with an infested individual.
- Lice can also be spread through the sharing of personal articles like hats, towels, brushes, helmets and hair ties.
- There is also a possibility of spreading head lice via a pillow, headrest or similar items.
- Humans cannot get head lice from pets.



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Head Lice Tips for Parents

The student will be excused from school the day he/she was sent home and one additional day. After these days, the days missed will be unexcused. The student may return to school after treatment with head lice medication and all nits removed. Parent/guardian must bring the box of the lice medication to the school and have the student checked by the school nurse or other appropriate school staff. Once cleared the student may return to the classroom. The student cannot ride the bus until cleared.

To eliminate head lice successfully, it is very important that all treatment instructions and steps be carefully followed and completed.

1. Examine your child's head, especially near the ears and at the back of the head/neck, for lice and nits if your child exhibits symptoms of a head lice. If lice or nits are found, all household members should be examined for lice and nits every 2–3 days. Anyone with lice or nits should be treated.
2. Before applying treatment, it may be helpful to remove clothing that can become wet or stained during treatment.
3. Apply lice shampoo, according to the instructions contained in the box or printed on the label. If your child has very long hair (longer than shoulder length), it may be necessary to use a second bottle. Pay special attention to instructions on the label or in the box regarding how long the medication should be left on the hair and how it should be washed out.
 - a. Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner before or after using lice shampoo.
 - b. If a few live lice are still found 8–12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. The medicine may take longer to kill all the lice.
 - c. If, after 8–12 hours of treatment, lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. Speak with your health care provider, a different medication may be necessary.
4. Nit (head lice egg) combs, often found in lice shampoo packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft.
 - a. You may also want to put 2 parts water to 1 part vinegar on the child's head. Be sure to get the hair very wet with the solution and all the way to the scalp. The vinegar will help loosen the nits and make them easier to remove. Save any leftover solution to dip your comb in to rinse the nits out of the comb. After combing all hair carefully, rinse the hair in warm water.
 - b. After removing all the nit blow dry the hair. The hot air will help kill the nits.



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5. Have your child put on clean clothing after treatment, and vacuum the area to remove any lice or nits from the floor.
6. Check the hair and comb with a nit 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. If more lice or nits are found it is important to retreat the hair.

Follow these steps to avoid other persons getting head lice:

1. Lice do not like the smell of mint. Lightly spray mouthwash on your child’s hair before school.
2. Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, backpacks, and other items that your child wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using hot water and the high heat drying cycle for no less than 20 minutes. Clothing, stuffed animals, and items that are not washable should be sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
3. Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes. Wash hair ribbons and other hair ties as well.
4. Vacuum the floor, furniture, and vehicles, particularly where your child sat or lid.

For more information, visit www.LiceMD.com

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics. “Head Lice: Every Parent’s Concern.” March 2007. http://www.aap.org/publiced/BR_Lice.htm
2. Frankowski, Barbara L., et al. “*The American Academy of Pediatrics. Clinical Report: Head Lice*” *Pediatrics*. Sept, 2007. 110:638-43. <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;110/3/638.pdf>
3. Amato, Jennifer. “Livingston Students Sent Home Due to Lice.” *The Sentinel*. Dec., 2007. <http://nbs.gmnews.com/news/2006/1207/Schools/006.html>
4. Weekend America Public Radio. “Lice!” Nov. 2006. Available at <http://weekendamerica.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/11/04/lice/>