



Life Cycle of Head Lice

Head Lice

Parents have the prime responsibility of assisting in the prevention and management of head lice cases through regular checks of their child's hair and starting immediate treatment when head lice are detected. Parents who suspect that their child has a case of head lice shall report this to the school nurse. Should a case of head lice be brought to the school's attention, the school nurse will maintain confidentiality at school, verify presence of an active infestation and bring it to the child's parents attention. The school nurse will educate about head lice identification, treatment, and prevention.

Though head lice may be a nuisance, they don't cause serious illness or carry any diseases. The following information from the American Academy of Pediatrics will help you check for, treat, and prevent the spread of head lice.

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Pages/Signs-of-Lice.aspx>

By the time an infestation is found, the child is likely to have had it for at least a month.





A Quick Look at Head Lice:

FACTS

- Head lice cannot jump, fly and hop from head to head.
Head lice do not have wings. They have six legs, which are used for grasping hair strands. The hooked shape of these legs makes it impossible for lice to jump or hop.
- Head lice are about the size of a sesame seed.
Adult lice are light brown in coloration, yet may have a dark brown streak noted in the abdominal area. The tiny, newly hatched bugs are dark brown after the first feeding. Also eggs that are ready to hatch have a dark brown appearance; these will be found on the hair shaft $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or closer to the scalp. The heat from the scalp is needed to hatch.
- The best method for finding head lice is the use of a fine-toothed comb
Lice move fast and hide well. To be effective in finding lice, one should use a lice comb or fine-toothed comb on the hair. Hair should be parted into small sections and combed from the scalp to the ends of the hair.
- Hair should be treated only when live bugs are found on the head.
If only nits/hatched eggs (have a tear shape/white color) are found more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or more from the scalp, then do not treat. Nits/hatched eggs without the presence of live bugs, are not an indicator of an active infestation. Combing with a nit comb or physically removing nits from hair shaft with fingernail are effective methods in removing the nits.
- Nits/hatched eggs or brown/ready to hatch eggs are difficult from the hair shaft.
Nits are glued into place by the female louse and are difficult to remove. The uses of fine-toothed nits combs or fingernails are the best methods for removal of white/empty and brown/viable eggs.
- Head lice can spread by prolonged, direct contact with or by sharing combs, brushes, hats with any one who has active lice.
Since lice do not fly or jump, they spread from person to person through prolonged, direct contact or more unlikely, the sharing of items that have been in direct contact with active lice.
- Treatment consists of a 3-step process: use of a lice killing agent, nit removal, and environmental clean-up.
Once it has been determined that active lice are present, a lice-killing shampoo should be used with directions carefully followed. Combing and removal of eggs then needs to take place. Another shampoo treatment needs to be done 7 days later in order to kill any lice that have hatched from eggs that were missed with combing. Combing with a lice comb needs to be repeated daily for up to 2 weeks after live lice are found.
- Head lice do not carry disease.
Head lice do not carry disease, yet they have been a known nuisance since the time of the Egyptians. Lice are not an indicator of poor hygiene and occur in every economic level.

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

<http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/HeadLicePediculosisCapitis>