

Head Lice (Pediculosis) Facts

- *A lice infestation can happen to anyone. Socioeconomic background or lack of cleanliness has nothing to do with determining who gets head lice.
- *Don't be embarrassed if your child is sent home because of head lice. Between 8 and 12 million children get lice each year.
- *Lice do not jump or fly. They crawl. Thus, the most common means of lice transmission is through head-to-head contact.
- *Indirect transmission is uncommon, but may occur via shared combs, brushes, hats, and hair ornaments that have been in contact with an infested person. Teach your child not to share hair accessories.
- *Schools are not a common source of transmission. Creating unnecessary panic in the school is a disservice to our students not based on facts and current research.
- *Head lice are parasitic insects that live only on human heads and feed on blood obtained from biting the scalp. One louse is capable of laying up to 300 eggs (nits). These eggs hatch in 7-14 days.
- *Head lice are not known to transmit microbes that cause disease, thus lice are not generally a health concern. However, excessive itching of the scalp may lead to infection.
- *Eggs (nits) are easier to see and will appear as opaque, oval shaped, white sacs that are firmly stuck to the hair shaft and cannot be easily removed when you run your finger over them. They are glued to the hair, not loose like dandruff.
- *Commonly, a child with head lice will be observed itching his or her scalp a lot.
- *Parents should regularly check children's hair for lice and or nits.
- *If lice are found, seek the advice of your pediatrician regarding treatment. Most cases of head lice will respond to over the counter products such as RID or Nix, but it is essential that the product directions be strictly followed. Some products direct you to treat the child's hair initially and then again in 7 to 10 days.
- *Be sure to check the entire family, including adults and preschool siblings. I stress that you contact your physician before choosing a treatment, especially if your child is under the age of 5 or if you are a pregnant woman.
- *Notify the school nurse if you find head lice on your child, if you need assistance in identifying head lice or nits, or if you have any questions.
- *The nits (eggs) need to be combed out diligently and the combing process should continue for 2 weeks. Be patient. Combing out of the nits is the single most important aspect in lice eradication.
- *It is known that 30% of nits (lice eggs) may survive the chemical treatments on the market. For this reason, you may need to switch to a different product if the first one is unsuccessful.
- *If head lice have been found in your child's classroom, it is helpful for you to check your child's head daily for the next 2 weeks.
- *Lice may survive one or two days off a human head. If your child has lice, vacuum your home and vehicle carpet and upholstery thoroughly. Linens should be washed in hot water and dried in the dryer on the highest setting. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot water or thrown away. Stuffed animals and items that can't be washed should be placed in a dark plastic bag for 2 weeks.
- *If your child has head lice, notify their school nurse. [Management of Pediculosis Information Packet](#) will then be provided. Any student treated for head lice must be rechecked by the school nurse before being allowed to return to school.