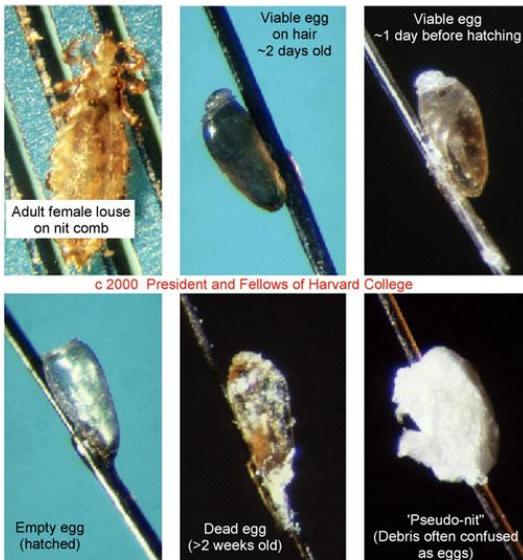


How Do I Know My Child Has Head Lice?

While persons with light infestations may not notice any problem, itching is the most common symptom, caused by a reaction to the bites. Other symptoms include a tickling feeling of something moving in the hair, irritability, and sores on the head caused by scratching.

Detection of nits, nymphs or adult lice is the only way to confirm the presence of lice. It requires a thorough examination of the scalp. Nymphs and adults move quickly and are often difficult to observe. Finding nits close to the scalp is the usual way to confirm an infestation. However, finding nits which are more than 1/4 inch from the scalp usually indicates that they are old and not viable, despite being firmly cemented to the hair.

Images to assist in the identification of head lice and their eggs.
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>



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[Return to text](#)

Treatment

To treat a head lice infestation, an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription shampoo, lotion or cream rinse is used. The instructions of your healthcare provider and the product label should be followed carefully when using any lice treatment products. If active lice are observed 8-12 hours after treatment, consult again with your health care provider regarding the use of a different product.

Not all products available to treat head lice have FDA approval. The FDA verifies the clinical information about a product and determines if it is safe to use. Many products may claim to be safe and effective but lack scientific data to prove it. Always seek a recommendation from a trusted healthcare provider before starting any lice treatment.

Many alternatives to pediculicides (products designed to treat lice) have been promoted because of treatment failures. Unfortunately, there is little documentation that these methods are effective at killing the lice and nits on the head. Some of these remedies include olive oil, mayonnaise, tea tree oil, petroleum jelly and hair dryers. Among substances which should never be used are kerosene, gasoline, and pesticides not registered for treatment of lice, such as diazinon.

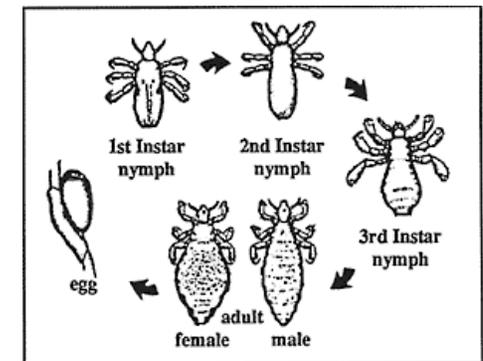
Manual removal- An infestation may be eliminated by aggressive combing with a fine-toothed comb daily for at least 1 ½ weeks until all live lice and nits are removed. Certain commercial products and white vinegar may help loosen the glue holding the nits to the hair, but will often take many hours over a period of days to remove all of the nits. **Since many products do not kill nits, it is particularly important to remove all nits close to the scalp.**

What else can you do?

Head lice are usually transmitted by close personal contact with the hair of an infested person. However, transmission can also occur through the sharing of personal items, such as hats, headbands or coats, or the storage of these items together. At home, the sharing of such items as combs, brushes, towels, soft toys and bed sheets can also result in transmission.

Any stray lice and nits on clothing, towels and bedding that the infested person touched during the two days before treatment will be killed by machine washing and drying at temperatures over 128°F. Dry cleaning also kills lice. Stuffed animals and clothing that cannot be washed or dry cleaned may be sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks to kill all lice and nits. Combs and brushes can be soaked for an hour in 2% Lysol solution or heated in a pan of water to 120°F for ten minutes.

Since lice do not survive for long off the scalp, the use of environmental insecticide sprays is not necessary. Vacuuming carpets and upholstered furniture including the car will remove any stray lice or nits. Of course, you must discard the vacuum cleaner bag or thoroughly cleanse the dirt cup.



Facts vs. Myth

FACT

- Nits must be laid by live lice. You cannot “catch” nits.
- Dogs, cats and other pets are not carriers of head lice and cannot cause transmission to humans or vice versa.
- Head lice do not jump, hop, swim or fly. They crawl from an infested person through frequent close or head-to-head contact and are not likely to wander from a scalp home where a meal is readily available.
- Transmission may occur through contact with infested person’s comb, hat or other hair accessories, bedding or upholstered furniture because live lice can live up to 24 hours off a scalp.
- Anyone can become infected with head lice. Infestations are not caused by personal or household cleanliness, use of shampoos or length of hair.
- Head lice do not transmit any disease and are not a public health threat.
- Infrequently, scalp infections may occur due to excessive scratching due to an irritation caused by the saliva of the lice or feces deposited on the scalp.

MYTH

- Lice are more common on people who are sick, have poor hygiene or live in dirty houses.
- People who get head lice don’t shampoo their hair often enough.
- Lice can hop, fly or jump on another person’s hair.
- People who have long hair are more likely to get lice.
- All lice bites cause red rashes on the scalp.
- Infested persons can feel when a louse bites their scalp.
- Nits found anywhere on a head means the child is still infested.

Websites/Resources

A 3.11 minute video of how to identify head lice may be viewed at the following web site:

<http://www.myheadlicetreatment.com/resources/how-to-video-instructions/how-do-i-identify-head-lice/>

Website of Dr. Richard Pollack, Harvard University;
<http://www.identify.us.com>

The Center for Disease Control
<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/schools.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;110/3/638>

National Association of School Nurses
Pediculosis Position Statement
<http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=237>

State of New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
http://www.state.nj.us/helth/cd/documents/f_hea_dlice.pdf

THIS BROCHURE IS INTENDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND IS **NOT** INTENDED TO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ADVICE PROVIDED BY YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact your school nurse

Phone: _____

Email: _____@msd.k12.net

What Every Parent Needs to Know About Head Lice.



Head lice are small, wingless, grayish-white insects, about 1/16 to 1/8 inch in length, which spend their entire life cycle on the head of humans as bloodsucking external parasites. Head lice have claws especially adapted for clinging to hair shafts.

Head lice do not transmit any diseases. Sores caused by scratching and crusting can result in secondary bacterial infections.

Nits The nit is a louse egg which is always glued by the female to the base of the hair shaft, only three to four mm from the scalp. A female can lay 50-150 eggs over a three to four-week period.

Life Cycle: Head lice eggs hatch in seven to nine days into the first nymph stage, which looks like a miniature adult. The nymph takes a blood meal by biting the scalp soon after hatching and continues to feed every three to six hours. In about nine days, the louse will have passed through two more nymphal stages and have achieved the adult stage. The adult remains on the head for its entire lifetime.

Adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, is wingless, has 6 legs equipped with claws to grasp hair, and is tan to grayish-white in color. Mating females lay 6-8 nits daily, potentially laying more than 150 nits in its life span of 30 days .