

Head Lice Fact Sheet

- Itching is the first sign of head lice. Check your child's head and scalp all over and especially behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the neck when scratching begins. They can live ANYWHERE, so, look all over the scalp. Head lice are tiny gray to brown insects about the size of a sesame seed. Lice glue their eggs to each strand of hair close to the scalp. A nit is an empty egg casing after the louse has hatched or died. A nit found ¼ inch or further away from the hair shaft is no longer living.
- There is no incubation period with head lice. When live lice move from one child's head to another they can begin laying eggs immediately.
- Children get head lice almost as much as the common cold. Millions get it at least one time, once a year. Any child can get head lice. It doesn't matter where they live or go to school, or if they are a boy or a girl, or how much money they have.
- Children get lice from other children. They move from child to child through head to head contact by sharing combs, brushes, hair fasteners, hats, caps, coats, neck scarves and even head phones. Lice cannot hop, jump or fly but can crawl from child to child anytime children are close together: during play, sports or even nap time. Sharing a locker or cubbyhole with a lice-infested child is a common way to spread lice. Lice can attach to your child while sitting on carpets or furniture. Lice can even attach to stuffed toys.
- Dealing with lice is difficult, sometimes embarrassing and can be overwhelming to anyone caring for children. By following these recommendations for treatment you should be able to get rid of the head lice and their eggs.
 1. Use an over-the counter FDA-approved shampoo treatment that can be found at a drug or grocery store. Contact your physician or health department for any questions regarding treatments options. Follow the directions on the packaging exactly. (If you cannot afford to pay for the shampoo/treatment, please tell your school nurse or guidance counselor).
 2. Remove as many eggs as possible with a special comb that comes with the head lice treatment.
 3. Treat your home at the same time you treat your child. Soak combs and brushes in some of the lice shampoo or in very, very hot water for one hour.
 4. Wash sheets, blankets and other bedding in the hottest setting of water on the washing machine. Dry them in a very hot dryer. Don't forget about the stuffed toys or pillows!
 5. Dry-clean non-washable items or seal these items in a plastic bag for two weeks or tumble them in a very hot dryer.
 6. Vacuum furniture, carpets and mattresses thoroughly.
 7. Treat hair a second time 7-10 days after the first treatment (or follow the instructions of the manufacturer of the lice treatment) to make sure that you kill any lice that may have hatched from eggs that might have been missed during the combing.
 8. There is no need to cut hair. Lice like to crawl on short hair just as much as long hair and they need the same treatment.
 9. Remind children not to share combs, brushes, hair accessories, headphones, hats, clothing, bedding, coats and so forth.
 10. Check your child's hair from time to time for signs of lice. Catching it early can cut down the number of treatments, save time and money.
 - 11. A parent or guardian must accompany the child to school the following day after treatment. The school nurse will check for the presence of live lice or viable nits before the child can return to school.**