

Understanding Head Lice

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny, wingless tan/brown insects that live and breed in human hair. They are about the size of a sesame seed.

The eggs, called nits, are easier to see than the lice themselves. They are yellowish-white and shaped like a tear drop. They firmly attached to the hair shaft about ¼ inch away from the scalp.

They like to live especially behind the ears and on the back of the neck. Lice survive by piercing the scalp to feed on blood. Skin irritation at the feeding site causes itching.

LICE CANNOT FLY, JUMP OR HOP.

How do lice spread?

Lice are primarily spread by direct hair-to-hair contact.

They are also spread through the sharing of combs, brushes, hats, headphones, sleeping bags and stuffed animals.

Lice can also be transmitted by sharing blankets, pillows and sheets.

Lice cannot survive away from the head more than 24-48 hours. However, nits can survive off of the body for a week or more, but in order to survive they must get back on the head soon after they hatch.

Lice cannot live on pets.

How do you prevent head lice?

Teach children not to share combs, brushes, hats or coats.

Do not try on other people's hats.

Teach children to hang their coats separately - placing hats and scarves inside coat sleeves.

Check your child's head if he/she complains of itching.

Getting rid of head lice as soon as they are found can prevent them from spreading in your home.



10 Days to Freedom from Head Lice

DAY 1

Notify and check all exposed friends and family members.

Treat anyone else who has live lice or nits on their heads.

Wash all bedding, clothing and toys in hot water (130°F) and dry on high heat for 30 minutes.

Items that cannot be washed should be stored in a tightly sealed garbage bag for 2 weeks or placed in a freezer for 24 hours.

Vacuum all carpeting, furniture, car seats and upholstery that your child was in contact with in the last 24-48 hours.

Soak combs, brushes and hair accessories in boiling hot water for 5-10 minutes.

Don't forget about coats, hats and backpacks!

DAY 2

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

DAY 3

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

DAY 4

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

DAY 5

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

DAY 6

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

DAY 7

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions.

DAY 8

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions unless this was done on day 7.

DAY 9

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions unless this was done on day 7 or 8.

DAY 10

Vacuum

Check all members of the home for nits that may have been missed.

Comb/pick nits out of hair

If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions unless this was done on day 7, 8 or 9.

Some lice treatments may indicate a second treatment after 7 to 10 days. Please follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and only apply when it is suggested.