

## What Are Head Lice?

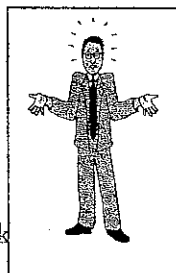
Head lice are tiny, crawling bugs the size of a sesame seed and are usually light brown in color. They avoid light, which makes it difficult to see them. Nits (lice eggs) are tiny and light in color, the size of a poppy seed, and are attached to the hair shaft, very close to the scalp, by a type of insect super glue. Nits are found anywhere on the hairs of the head but are mainly found behind the ears and on the top and back of the head and neck. Lice are very small and hard to see but with a good light or a magnifying glass you can see them. The nits may look like dandruff, but are cemented to the hair shafts and cannot be removed easily.

### How long do the bugs live? The life of a louse...


The female louse will live on a person for 20-30 days and can live off the head at room temperature for 1-2 days. The adult louse can lay as many as 300 eggs in her lifetime, which hatch in 7-10 days.

How is it spread? Head lice CANNOT jump or fly; they are spread by head to head contact or by sharing things such as...


- ◆ Personal items clothing, combs head bands, hats, scarves or helmets.
- ◆ Towels, linens, pillows, or naptime blankets.
- ◆ Costumes and clothes for pretend play.
- ◆ Stuffed and cloth toys.



This is actual size of:

Adult louse: 

Immature louse: 

Nit on hair: 

### Symptoms:

- ◆ Itching on the head caused by the bite of the louse.
- ◆ Persistent scratching or scratch marks that may look like
- ◆ There may be no symptoms at all

Who gets head lice?... Contrary to popular belief, the presence of head lice is not a sign of **unclean people or homes**. Head lice will set up residence with a person of any age or gender. Anyone who has close contact with an infested person, or shares personal items can become infested. Frequent bathing or shampooing will NOT prevent lice or eliminate them once they are established.

Prevention: Avoid sharing personal and other items as stated above. **Teach children** how to avoid spreading lice. **DO NOT SHARE beds and personal items at home if at all possible during the infestation period. Check your child \*\*DAILY\*\* for nits and lice if there is lice at school or if friends have had them.**

Diagnosis: is the presence of the live louse or more frequently its nits. Viable nits are found on the hair shaft within 1/4 to 1/2 inch of the scalp.

Treatment: Treatment is directed at **getting rid of the lice from both the infested person and from his/her surroundings** and personal items. All household members and persons with close physical contact with the infested person should be examined for lice and treated if infested.

Getting started: Check all household members for head lice and treat if needed following the directions below. **Notify all people who have recently been in contact with the infested person.** There are..... **THREE steps that MUST be done at the same time:**

- ◆ Personal hygiene
- ◆ Household maintenance
- ◆ Getting rid of **ALL** the nits



### \*\*\*DAY ONE: PERSONAL HYGIENE\*\*\*

- ◆ SHAMPOO FIRST with a detergent shampoo (Prell/Neutrogena) that does not have oils, scents or conditioner (you may use liquid dish soap).

- ◆ Dry hair with a towel.
- ◆ Apply a head lice shampoo (for example NIX ®, R&C Shampoo ®, RID ®) over a sink (NOT in a tub or a shower). Read and follow all the instructions on the product carefully. **\*ALL OF THESE TYPES OF PRODUCTS MUST BE USED AS DIRECTED\*** Use a clean towel but leave hair wet for nit removal.

### Household Maintenance:

- ◆ Wash bedding, linens, stuffed toys and recently worn garments.
- ◆ Machine dry on a hot setting.
- ◆ Vacuum rugs, furniture, mattresses, cars, etc.
- ◆ Dry clean unwashables OR put in a sealed, plastic bag for at least 2 weeks, in a freezer for 48 hours OR in a hot dryer for 30 minutes.
- ◆ Boil all combs and brushes in water. For 10 minutes or treat with pediculicide shampoo (NIX ®)
- ◆ Lice sprays are NOT recommended and can be harmful to people and animals.

### Getting rid of ALL the nits- THE most important step to follow!

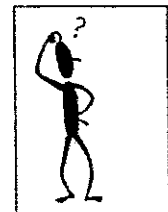
- ◆ Use good lighting. While still wet, comb hair completely and divide into small sections.
  - ◆ Remove Lice and eggs with a comb provided with shampoo. ACE® combs are also effective.
- \* \* \*DAY TWO THROUGH SEVEN\* \* \***
- ◆ Vacuum furniture and floors DAILY.
  - ◆ Recheck the head of each effected person at least DAILY. If lice or nits are found, remove them, clean your living space again and check with your health provider before reusing the head lice medication. (Kwell Shampoo® and Prioderm Shampoo are available by prescription only).
  - ◆ After 7 days repeat shampoo or treatment.

### \*\*NEXT TWO TO FOUR WEEKS\*\*

~ ~Keep checking head daily for lice and nits~ ~

### DO:

- ◆ Consult a physician before treating a) infants or children under the age of 2 years, b) pregnant or nursing women, c) anyone with extensive cuts or scratches on the head or neck. d) Has used a lice product within the past 7 days. *Although these products will kill lice none will kill 100% of the nits.*
- ◆ Your health insurance or HMO may pay the cost of head lice shampoo.



### DO NOT:

- ◆ Use kerosene, gasoline or animal pesticides.
- ◆ Use lice products more often than recommended.
- ◆ Fumigate (the use of flea bombs or commercial sprays). It is not effective and can cause serious health problems.
- ◆ Shave heads.
- ◆ Treat pets.
- ◆ Use Lindane® or Kwell® unless under the direction of a physician, because of its potential toxicity.

**THE ONLY WAY A SCHOOL NURSE CAN TRACK THE SPREAD OF LICE ...IS WHEN A PARENT NOTIFIES THE NURSE. ALL INFORMATION IS HELD IN CONFIDENCE!**