

What are head lice?

Head lice are very small (less than 1/8 inch long), wingless, tan-colored insects that live on the human head. They live and lay their eggs (called nits) close to the scalp. The nits are tiny, gray, white or brown in color and are firmly cemented to the hair shaft.

Who can get head lice?

Anyone can get head lice. Having head lice does not mean that you are a bad housekeeper or that your children have poor hygiene. Head lice are a common problem that affects many families.

What are the symptoms?

Itching and scratching behind the ears or on the scalp. The easiest way to know if your child has lice is to look for nits attached to the hair (usually within ½ inch of the scalp). Don't confuse dandruff with nits. **Nits stick on the hair.**

When do the symptoms appear?

It may take two to three weeks before the intense itching is noticed.

How are head lice spread?

- They move quickly and spread easily during close personal contact with a person who has head lice.
- They do not jump, fly or hop.
- They can also be spread by sharing:
 - Combs / Brushes
 - Hats / Caps
 - Head gear
 - Storage of items in a shared locker
- You cannot get lice from pets, and you cannot spread lice to pets.



How to treat head lice.

One of the most important steps in treating lice is removing the nits. The best way to remove nits from hair is to use a nit comb. Lice and nits are most effectively removed by using a combination of combing and lice treatments. **Carefully read and follow directions on any treatment product label.**



Product information

Chemical products:

- RID or Nix

Non-chemical products:

- Licefreee!, LiceMD, or Hair Clean

Alternatives (which may suffocate lice):

- 100% real mayonnaise (not light, low-fat, fat-free or Miracle Whip)
- Olive Oil

**Brand names are used only as examples of products. The Brown County Health Department does not recommend or endorse the use of any specific brand.*

Stay Lice Free

- Contacts of people with head lice should be checked for nits or lice and treated if necessary.
- Clean items that have been in contact with the head of a person with lice in the 48 hours before treatment.
- Clothing and bedding should be washed in hot water and a high heat drying cycle.
- Items that are not washable can be stored in plastic bags for 10 days or placed in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes.
- Soak combs and brushes for 5-10 minutes in hot water.
- Vacuum the floor, furniture, and car seats.
- Do not share combs, brushes, hats, head gear, jackets, or earphones.
- Do not share pillows, beds, and personal items.
- Check your child's head daily if there has been a recent outbreak and weekly as a precautionary measure.

Helpful Hints

Identify it!

- Check everyone in the household for lice or nits. Nits are small gray, white or brown, oval-shaped eggs that seem glued to hair.

Treat it!

- Treat only those household members found to have lice or nits. **Follow the product label exactly.**
- For children under the age of 2, remove crawling bugs and nits by hand. If this does not work, ask your children's health care provider for treatment recommendations.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, contact your physician before using.

Comb it!

- Combing is the most important step!
- Continue to check and comb for 2-3 weeks until you are sure all lice and nits are gone.

Repeat it!

Head Lice



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