

---

## HOW TO AVOID A 'HAIR RAISING' EXPERIENCE

- Watch for signs of head lice. Check your children every few days if head lice are reported at their school. Lice are easier to eliminate if caught early.
- Teach your children not to share hats, head-gear, scarves, headphones and grooming items (combs, hairbrushes, etc.) and to avoid direct head-to-head contact.
- To kill lice on bedding, clothes, etc., wash and dry them as you would ordinarily. NEVER add any pesticide. Vacuum materials that cannot be washed.
- If you are concerned about head lice on carpets or furniture, vacuum them thoroughly or wipe smooth surfaces with a damp cloth.
- Wash stuffed animals or vacuum them thoroughly. NEVER spray them with a pesticide.
- To kill lice on brushes, combs or hair accessories, wash them with hot, soapy water. NEVER spray them with a pesticide.
- Cooperate with your school's head lice policy. Your child may be temporarily excluded from the school, but the policy helps avoid widespread head lice outbreaks.

---

## 10 TIPS FOR MANUAL REMOVAL

1. Work in a well lighted area or use a flashlight and hand lens.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles. A hair detangler spray or other hair conditioner may aid in this process.
3. Divide the hair into sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.
4. Use a lice comb to detect and remove lice and nits. See figure 1 and figure 2 in this brochure.
5. Go through hair sections from the scalp to the end of the hair. Nits are usually found close to the scalp.
6. Dip the comb in a cup of hot, soapy water or use tape to remove lice, nits or debris from the comb.
7. Sift through the same section of hair and look for attached nits and live lice.
8. Move on to the next section until the entire scalp and all hair has been checked.
9. Screen the infested person every day for 10 days and regularly thereafter.
10. If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, another manual search is recommended.



*"Manual removal is the safe alternative and necessary component of any head lice treatment regimen." -National Pediculosis Association*

- You can completely control a head lice infestation with manual removal alone.
- You cannot completely control head lice with head lice shampoos alone. You must combine shampoo treatment with manual removal.

---

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE 'NITTY-GRITTY' ABOUT HEAD LICE



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
SCIENCES / ATHENS, GEORGIA 30602

Paul Guillebeau and Gretchen Van De Mark  
Department of Entomology

---

# HEAD LICE 101: THE BASICS

- Do **not** panic! Head lice are *not* an emergency and, in most cases, do not pose any health risk. However, misuse of pesticides and use of unlabeled treatments (ex., kerosene) *can* pose a health risk.
- Head lice CANNOT live off a human host for more than 24-48 hours. Head lice CANNOT live on pets. Head lice CANNOT reproduce in carpets, furniture or other household furnishings.
- **PESTICIDE SPRAYS DO LITTLE OR NOTHING TO CONTROL LICE.** NEVER treat your home, car, furniture, beds, pillows, or clothing with pesticides (e.g. 'lice bombs,' flea bombs, sprays, etc.) in an attempt to control head lice. You will expose yourself and your family to unnecessary pesticide risk.
- If your school sprays rooms, buses, furniture, etc., to control head lice, ask them to stop immediately. Refer your school to the Cooperative Extension Service brochure entitled *A School's Guide to the 'Nitty-Gritty' About Head Lice*.



- Head lice are very common among all classes of people. More than 12 million people, mostly children and school personnel, get head lice per year.
- Direct head-to-head contact with an infested person is the main way head lice are transmitted, but they may also be transmitted by sharing hats, scarves, headphones, combs and other hair accessories. Lice *cannot* hop, jump or fly, but they *can* crawl rapidly.

- The best treatment for head lice is manual removal (see '10 Tips for Manual Removal' in this brochure).
- If a lice shampoo is warranted, ask your doctor or pharmacist for specifics on the product and follow *all* label instructions *exactly*. Misapplications can be ineffective and dangerous as well.



Figure 1:  
Head Louse  
*Pediculus capitis*

Head lice are small, wingless parasitic insects. They are typically 1/6-1/8 inch long, brownish in color with darker margins. The claws on the end of each of their six legs are well adapted to grasping a hair strand.

A child cannot "catch nits." Nits (lice eggs) can only be laid by live lice.

Female head lice glue their grayish-white to brown eggs (nits) securely to hair shafts. The eggs are resistant to pesticides, and they are difficult to remove without a special 'nit-comb.'

The nits are generally near the scalp, but they may be found anywhere on the hair shaft.



Figure 2:  
Nits (lice eggs)  
(photo courtesy of the University of Florida)

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

Circular 851

Reviewed March 2009

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/Affirmative Action  
Organization Committed to a Diverse Work Force



# Fannin County School System

Educational Health Services

## HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

We are continuing to find students with head lice. This is an increasing problem throughout the country. For your family's protection and to prevent spreading lice to others, it is recommended that parents check their children about once a week.

**WHO GETS LICE?** -Anyone. Frequent, regular shampooing does not prevent lice. Younger children seem to catch them more frequently because of more close contact with one another. Animals do not carry or contract head lice.

**HOW DO YOU GET THEM?** - They walk, they do not fly or hop. They travel from person to person directly (two heads touching) or are transferred via personal articles (i.e. combs, brushes, hats, pillowcases, etc.)

**FACTS ABOUT LICE** - The adult louse is a wingless insect less than 1/8" long and is a pale brownish-gray. Lice do not carry disease. They bite the scalp causing itching. They move quickly and avoid light so they are often difficult to see.



The female louse lays 3-6 eggs (nits) per day and may live up to 30 days.

**FACTS ABOUT NITS** - The nits (egg sacs) of lice are cemented to human hair with nature's own superglue. The nits appear as small, silvery oval-shaped specks that look like dandruff. But they are very difficult to remove. The nits hatch in 7-10 days.

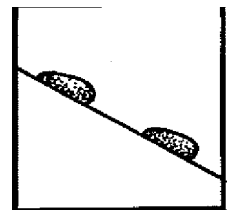
Students with head lice will be excluded from school until they are properly treated.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD COMES HOME WITH HEAD LICE:

Don't panic. Don't blame. Anyone - adult or youngster-can get head lice. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or on shared objects (pillows, combs, hats, towels, etc.). It has nothing to do with cleanliness and does not reflect on you as a parent. The problem is easily managed. Just follow the instructions below:

1. Check every member of the family.

Look for tiny silvery egg sacs (nits) on hair shafts, near the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Head lice are small brownish gray insects without wings. Any family member with lice or nits must be treated.



2. Head lice treatment.

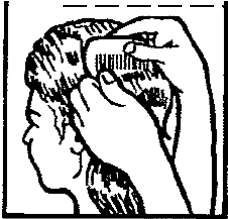
A two-step process involving 1) the use of a medicated pediculicidal product and 2) combing out all nits. Proceed as follows:



- a. Remove child's shirt and provide a towel to cover the eyes. (This is essential.) Do not treat in the bathtub or shower, but have the child lean over *the* sink (this confines the lice product to the scalp/neck).
- b. Use one of several louse remedies (pediculicidal product) available at your pharmacy. Some are available by prescription, some over the counter. All these products must be used carefully, observing all safety guidelines. Also consider:

(1) consulting your obstetrician *if* you are pregnant or nursing (whether treating yourself or others); (2) consulting your physician before treating anyone with extensive cuts or scratches on the head or neck, or anyone using other medications. **DO NOT USE THESE PRODUCTS ON INFANTS.\***

**DO READ ALL PACKAGE INFORMATION BEFORE USING THESE PRODUCTS.\*\***  
**AVOID PERSONAL LICE SPRAYS.**



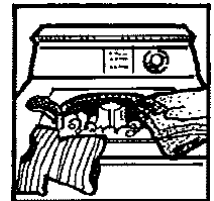
- c. Although it can take time and sometimes be difficult, "nit picking" or removing all nits will insure complete treatment. Louse products do not kill all the nits, and survivors will hatch into crawling lice within 7-10 days, generating a cycle of self-reinfestation. Even dead nits will cling to the hair and cause uncertainty about reinfestation. Nit removal can be accomplished with a special metal combing tool manufactured for this purpose or by picking them out with the fingernails.

Note: Nit combing is best accomplished with hair which is dry or slightly damp. Discard nits into plastic bag and seal for disposal.

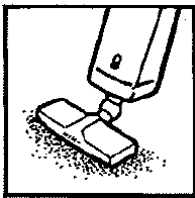
3. Following nit removal, have child put on clean clothing.
4. A daily nit check is advisable for at least 10 days following treatment and then check should become part of routine home hygiene. You may have to retreat in 7-10 days if there is evidence of new nits or newly-hatched lice. (Regardless of precautions taken at home, reinfestation from others can still take place.) Treatment itself can cause itching; do not treat again on the basis of itchiness alone.

#### TREATMENT OF PERSONAL ARTICLES AND ENVIRONMENT

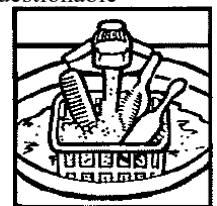
1. Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens which have been in contact with the infested person during the last three days. Use hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Non-washables such as stuffed animals, sleeping bags, headphones, helmets, etc. can be vacuumed, dry cleaned or stored in tightly sealed plastic bag at room temperature for two weeks.



2. Vacuum everywhere. Rugs, upholstered furniture and mattresses, even car seats should be carefully vacuumed to pick up any living lice or nits attached to fallen hairs. Discard vacuum bag into sealed plastic bag for disposal. The use of insecticidal sprays is not recommended and strongly discouraged as it may be harmful to family members and pets and is of questionable benefit.



3. Soak combs, brushes, etc. in hot water 5-10 minutes. Also soak hair barrettes, ribbons, head bands, etc.



#### REPORTING CASES

Don't be embarrassed to notify your child's school (daycare, camp, etc.) so other parents can be alerted to a possible outbreak. Also notify your child's playmate's parents. Parental cooperation will help protect all children including your own.

\* Lice/nits on infants should be removed manually.

\*\* Package directions for prescription NIX suggest it is not necessary to remove nits. The Health Department recommends nit removal following treatment with all products.

For more information contact your school nurse, Health Department, or National Pediculosis Association, P.O. Box 610189, Newton, MA 02461, (781) 449-NITS (6487), [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org)