
2023

A Guide to Lice



Dunlap Community School District #323

Every Student. Each Day.

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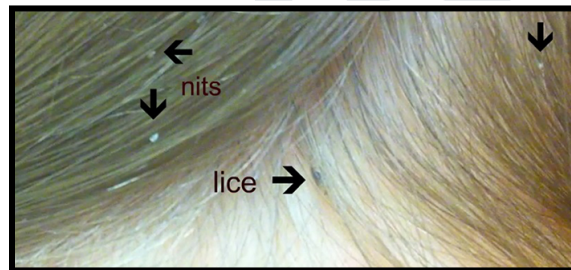
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What is Lice?

Lice are tiny, wingless insects that feed on human blood. Lice spread from person to person through close contact and by sharing belongings.

There are three types of lice:

- **Head lice** found on the scalp. They're easiest to see at the nape of the neck and over the ears.
- **Body lice** that live in clothing and bedding and move onto the skin to feed. Body lice most often affect people who aren't able to bathe or wash clothing often, such as homeless people.
- **Pubic lice**, also called crabs, occur on the skin and hair of the pubic area. Less often, they may be found on coarse body hair, such as chest hair, eyebrows or eyelashes.



Common signs and symptoms of lice

- **Intense itching** on the scalp, body or in the genital area.
- **A tickling feeling** from the movement of hair.
- **The presence of lice on your scalp, body, clothing, or pubic or other body hair.** ¹Adult lice may be about the size of a sesame seed or slightly larger.
- **Lice eggs (nits) on hair shafts.** Nits may be difficult to see because they're very tiny. They're easiest to spot around the ears and the nape of the neck. Nits can be mistaken for dandruff, but unlike dandruff, they can't be easily brushed out of hair.

¹ Information retrieved from Mayo Clinic

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lice/symptoms-causes/syc-20374399>

- **Sores on the scalp, neck and shoulders.** Scratching can lead to small red bumps that can sometimes get infected with bacteria.
- **Bite marks,** especially around the waist, groin, upper thighs and pubic area.



Images from Lice Clinics of America

<https://liceclinicsupstateny.com/the-head-lice-life-cycle/>

Life Cycle of a Louse

A head louse's life begins as an egg, also called a nit. The adult female louse lays the egg and attaches it to a human hair strand using an exceptionally strong glue-like substance. Thanks to this "glue," the nit will remain on the hair throughout all kinds of bathing, swimming, and hairstyling. Lice attach nits $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch or less from the scalp so that it can be kept at an ideal temperature before hatching; that means nits farther than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the scalp most likely have already hatched or are not viable.

After approximately eight days, the egg hatches into a nymph. The nymph louse is not yet mature enough to reproduce. The nymph will feed on the host's blood on a daily basis as it grows and undergoes three molts. Each molt—or shedding of the outer skin—takes approximately three days. This means that it only takes about nine days for a baby louse to become an adult louse!

Once the louse finishes its third and final molt, it is then ready to mate and lay eggs. Female lice are capable of laying up to eight eggs per day for about three days, up until they die. That's as



many as 24 eggs per female louse. When it comes to transferring to a new host, head lice move quickly. They primarily spread to new hosts when there is direct head-to-head or hair-to-hair contact. As this contact occurs, usually during photos, hugs, or sitting and leaning against another person, lice can crawl from head to head in a matter of seconds.

Life Cycle of a Louse



Prevention

- Avoid head to head contact between students during play and other activities.
- Do not allow students to share personal belongings such as hats, scarves, coats, combs, brushes, hair accessories, and headphones.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to shared spaces where hats and clothing are hung on common hooks or lockers.
- Avoid soft pillows, blankets, and soft seating options in the classroom.

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Guidelines

Dunlap School District adopts an evidence based practice regarding lice. Dunlap Community Unit School District #323 believes that it will result in a decrease of unnecessary absences, reduce embarrassment to the student and decrease the overuse of potential harmful chemicals.

Student identified during school hours to have an active case of head lice:

1. Notify parent/guardian directly.
2. Parent/guardian will be encouraged to pick up their child but will not be required to do so.
3. Student may return to class. Immediate removal of the child is unnecessary – if the child has lice, they probably have been infested and prompt removal of the child may lead to embarrassment. The child can be sent home at the end of the day and should be allowed on the bus. This is supported by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses.
4. Parent/guardian of affected child will be notified their child must be properly treated and may return to school the day after treatment. A sample notification letter is in the Appendix.
5. School will send out a school wide messenger when there is a suspected case of lice. A detailed sample notification letter is in the Appendix.

Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Pediculosis, or head lice, are tiny parasitic insects that live on the scalps of their host. Lice generally only causes a few children to scratch their heads. The topic itself tends to create great panic in adults. Head lice do not transmit disease, are not a sign of poor hygiene, they cannot fly or jump, and they do not discriminate based on socioeconomic groups, race, gender or age. Nor is a child with lice a sign of neglect.

The position of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National School Nurse Association is that no healthy child should be excluded from school, and since head lice do not make you ill, it is their recommendation to eliminate the “No Nit” practice and that students with nits remain in school and not be immediately excluded. They advise that when lice are found at school, the parent/guardian are to be notified, and the child will be dismissed. The student can return the next day after appropriate treatment is given.

In following the recommendations of the CDC, ACP and NSNA on how the district manages head lice in our schools, we will be safeguarding your child’s health, and ensure that his or her

education is not disrupted. Please, as always, be sure to watch for any signs of lice with your own child(ren) and treat when appropriate.

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Resources

Peoria County Health Department

<https://www.pcchd.org/159/Head-Lice>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

National Association of School Nurses

<https://www.nasn.org/programs/educational-initiatives/lice-lessons>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/110/3/638.full.pdf>

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Sample Parent Communication for Classroom/Grade Level

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am writing to inform you that there has been a reported case of head lice in our school. The following information is provided to you regarding head lice for your reference:

- Even though they do not jump or fly, they can spread from one student to another by sharing combs, brushes, clothing, hats and in bedding.
- Head lice are not known to spread disease.
- Head lice can happen to anyone. It is not a sign of poor health habits or being dirty.
- There are many lice treatment shampoos on the market as well as other mechanical and manual methods of controlling the lice.
- Parents and guardians are the best source of detection of head lice and are encouraged to check their child frequently.
- No healthy child will be excluded from school or be required to miss school because of lice or nits per the American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC, and IDPH.

If you discover a case of head lice, please notify the school. A lice outbreak is easier to treat if caught early.

Additional Resources:

Peoria County Health Department

<https://www.pcchd.org/159/Head-Lice>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

National Association of School Nurses

<https://www.nasn.org/programs/educational-initiatives/lice-lessons>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/110/3/638.full.pdf>

Respectfully,

<Principal or School Nurse>

Sample Parent Letter for a Student with Head Lice

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Head lice or nits (lice eggs) have been found in your child's hair.

Head lice are spread mostly by direct head-to-head contact. The sharing of hats, combs, and other hair accessories can also spread head lice, but this is not common. Anyone can get head lice. A head lice infestation has nothing to do with cleanliness or parenting skills.

It is important to treat your child. Please begin treatment as soon as possible. If you need assistance with purchasing treatment kits, please let your school principal or nurse know.

Tips for prescription or over-the-counter head lice treatment

- Regardless of whether or not you use an over-the-counter head lice product or a prescribed treatment, it is very important that you read and follow all directions on the product's label.
- Do not use a cream rinse, combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner on the hair before using the lice medicine.
- It is recommended that both the person getting treated and the person administering the treatment put on clean clothing after the treatment is completed.
- Be cautious not to use more than one head lice medication at a time.
- Eight to twelve hours after treatment, examine your child's head again. If you still see a few lice, but they are moving more slowly than before, do not re-treat. Comb the dead lice and any remaining live lice out of the hair using a fine-toothed nit/lice comb.
- To comb through the hair, sit in a well lighted area. Part the hair into small sections and comb through one section at a time. Be patient and thorough, it can take a lot of time.
- Eight to twelve hours after treatment, if no dead lice are found and lice appear to be as active as before, the medicine may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may recommend using a different lice treatment.
- Re-treatment is generally recommended for most lice medicines after 9-10 days. This should kill any newly hatched lice before they produce new eggs. Be sure to follow the instructions for the product you are using.
- It is important to check the hair and comb through it with a nit comb every 2-3 days. This will help to remove nits and lice and can decrease the chance of self re-infestation. Do this for 2-3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.
- Wash combs, brushes, hats and other hair accessories of the affected person in hot water.

Tips for combing out head lice and nits

- Use a fine-toothed louse or nit comb. These combs may be included within packages of medicated head lice treatment or you may buy one from most drug stores or pet supply stores. Combs with metal teeth spaced close together seem to work best.

- Sit behind your child, and use a bright light (and magnification if needed), to inspect and comb through the hair, one small section at a time.
- Repeat combing until no more active lice are observed.
- Comb daily until no live lice are discovered for two weeks. It may take several hours each night for several nights to eradicate lice. An entertaining video may help keep the child occupied during this time.
- Adult female lice cement eggs to the base of a hair shaft near the skin. As the hair grows, eggs are moved away from the scalp. Eggs more than ¼" from the scalp are nearly always hatched and do not mean live lice are present.
- Combs, brushes, hats and other hair accessories in contact with an infested person should be washed in hot water each day to dislodge any lice or nits.
- Combing is sometimes painful to the child or it may be impractical for other reasons. In these cases, consider using anti-lice products. Speak with the school nurse or your child's doctor for advice.

Treatment of clothes and other items

- A clothes dryer set at high heat or a hot pressing iron will kill lice or their eggs on pillowcases, sheets, nightclothes, towels and similar items your child has been in contact with during the previous two days. (Lice and their eggs do not live more than one to two days off the head.)
- Lice and their eggs on objects (such as toys) may be killed by freezing temperatures. Objects that cannot be put in a clothes dryer can be placed in a freezer (or outdoors if sufficiently cold) for several days. This treatment is rarely required.

Cleaning the house and car

- Once lice fall off of the head, they usually die within a day and eggs generally cannot live much longer. Thoroughly vacuuming the house and furniture is all that is really necessary for cleaning the home. A major cleaning effort will do little to further eliminate head lice.
- Insecticide treatments for the home, vehicles, or carpets and furniture are not needed and unnecessarily expose family members to the insecticides.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

2023

A Guide to Lice Appendix



Dunlap Community School District #323

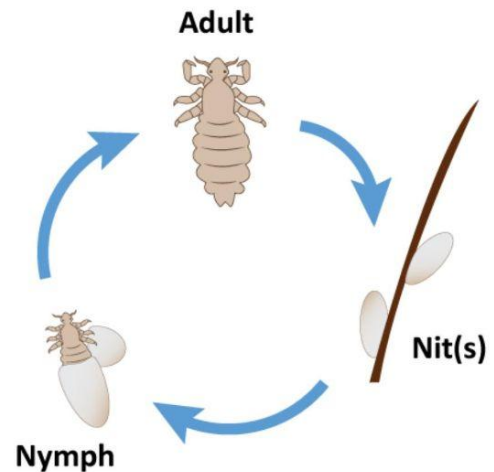
Each Child. Every Day

Got Lice? Here's What You Need to Know About Head Lice

Head lice are small insects that live in people's hair and feed on their blood. Head lice are common among school-aged children, but anyone can get head lice. Head lice do not spread disease and having head lice is not a sign of poor hygiene or being "dirty".

Head lice have three different life stages:

1. **Nits** – tiny, oval eggs that are glued to hair. Nits are yellow or white, and nymphs hatch from them within 8-9 days.
2. **Nymphs** – immature lice that become full-grown in 9-12 days and must feed on a person's blood to live. Nymphs look like adult lice but are smaller (the size of a pinhead).
3. **Adult lice** – full-grown lice about the size of a sesame seed that are tan or grayish-white. Adult head lice must feed on blood and will die within 1-2 days if removed from a person's head.



How do people get head lice?

- People get head lice from head-to-head contact with a person who has head lice. Head lice contact occurs most often during family gatherings, play dates, sleepovers, camps, or even when taking selfies.
- Though less common, head lice may also spread by sharing combs, hats, clothing, hair ties or clips, scarves, or other personal items that come in contact with a person's head.
- Head lice are more likely to spread among children at home, daycare, or at a friend's house than at school.
- Head lice glue nits on the hair shaft. Nits found closer to the head (less than ¼ inch from the scalp) usually contain lice that will eventually hatch. Nits located further from the scalp are usually empty or are dead.

How do I know if my child or I have head lice?

- If you or your child have head lice, you may see nits stuck to the hair near the scalp and lice crawling through the hair. Nits should not be confused with dirt or dandruff in the hair, which can be easily brushed away.
- A person with head lice may have a tickling feeling in their hair or an itchy scalp. Intense scratching may also occur.
- Children may be irritable and have difficulty sleeping since head lice are most active at night.

Where are head lice found?

- Head lice are usually found on a person's scalp, especially behind the ears and near the neckline.

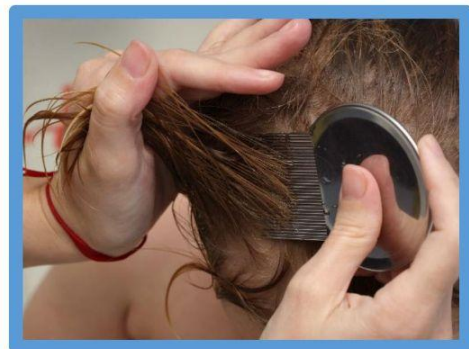
The best way to prevent head lice is to not touch heads with someone who has head lice. You may not be able to tell if someone has head lice or not, so it's best not to share personal items that could spread head lice from one person to another, such as hats, scarves, sweaters, headphones, or towels.

Head lice and nits have been found in my hair or my child's hair. Now what?

- Check the hair of everyone in your household to see if they have head lice.
- Over-the-counter products and medications prescribed by a doctor are available to treat head lice. ***Not all products kill nits, and retreatment is often needed 7-10 days after the first treatment, when nits hatch and more head lice are found.***
 - Follow the label directions carefully.
 - Only treat people who have head lice.
 - Do not leave the product on for a longer time than recommended – it will not kill lice faster.
 - Each person with head lice needs a complete treatment. Do not split a single box of shampoo between people.
 - Everyone in the home with head lice needs to be treated the same day.
- **Important:** Comb the hair in-between treatments to remove nits. Use a metal (not plastic) nit comb that has long teeth – several brands are available at your local pharmacy.



- Hair should be combed every 2-3 days for two weeks or until nits are no longer found. The goal is to remove any nits that can hatch new lice.
- It is easier to comb wet hair that has been parted into small sections. Each section of hair should be combed from root to tip. If lice or nits are found, wipe or rinse the comb before using it again.



Treatment doesn't seem to be working. What's wrong?

- The problem is not head lice (nits may look like dandruff or drops of hair styling product).
- The label directions for treatment were not followed properly.
- Lice may be resistant to some available lice treatment products.
- You might have gotten head lice again.

Remember: It takes 8-12 hours for some products to kill head lice. If lice are still active after this time, the product may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with a healthcare provider.

Are there other treatment options for head lice? Do I need to treat my home for lice?

- Devices that blow heated air at high flow towards the scalp and hair have been shown to kill both nits and lice. Treatment requires at least 30 minutes and specialized training for use.
- There is no proof that vinegar, mayonnaise, olive oil, tea tree oil, or products that say they dissolve the glue on the nits “to ease their removal” actually work.
- Fumigation of the home is not necessary. To get rid of lice in the home:
 - Wash clothing, bedding, and other items used by the person with head lice in the 2 days before treatment in hot water (>130°F), then dry on the hottest heat cycle.
 - Place combs, brushes, hair bands, and hair clips in hot water (>130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
 - Vacuum carpets and furniture in areas where the person sat or laid down.



A How-To Guide for Nit Combing

Head lice are common in school-aged children, residents of congregate living settings, and people who have close, head-to-head contact with others. If head lice are found in a person's hair, it has nothing to do with how clean the person is or the environment they live in.

This guide will help explain the steps of nit combing, which is the process of using a specialized comb to remove "nits" (lice eggs) from a person's hair.

Why is nit combing important?

Nit combing helps remove nits that are in the hair of someone who has head lice. There are several treatment products available that are designed to kill head lice, but not all treatment products kill nits. If nits are not treated or properly removed from the hair, new lice can hatch, lay more eggs, and the problem will continue. Proper nit combing takes time, but it is necessary to treat and stop a head lice infestation.



Before you start...

- **Check the hair of all household members and/or close contacts** using a bright light and magnifying glass (if needed). If lice are found, it is important to treat all infested individuals at the same time whenever possible.
- **Make sure you have the right kind of nit comb.** Nit combs are usually included with the purchase of over-the-counter head lice treatment products. Nit combs should be metal (not plastic) and have long teeth that are very close together. The narrow spacing between the teeth allows for small lice and nits that are stuck to the hair to be removed while combing. Metal flea combs, available at most pet stores, can also be used.
- **Nit combing takes time – but it's a very important step!** Depending on how thick or long a person's hair is, nit combing can take an hour or more because all parts of the hair should be combed completely.



Nits are usually glued to the hair and can be difficult to remove with a nit comb, so some parts of the hair will need to be combed multiple times. Nits can also be removed by using a fingernail to pick off the nit from the hair, or by using a pair of scissors to cut the individual hair strand below where the nit is attached.

Things you need before getting started:

- Finely-toothed, metal nit comb
- Bright light source
- Magnifying glass (if available)
- Regular comb or hairbrush
- Spray bottle with water
- White towel or sheet
- Bowl of soapy water
- Paper towels or facial tissues
- Clips or hair bands

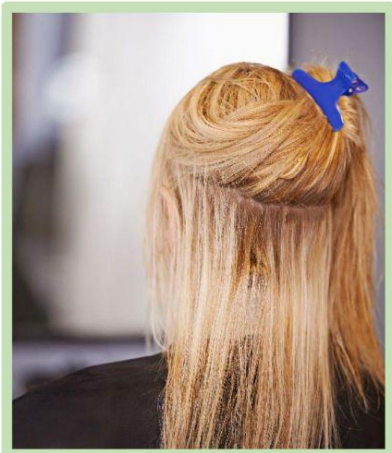
**If dealing with a head lice infestation in a child, it may be helpful to provide the child with an activity or video to keep them entertained.

How to Comb for Nits

1. Work in an area with a bright light so you can easily see through the person's hair. Cover the shoulders and back of the person with a white towel or sheet to make it easier to find any lice that may fall off while combing.
2. Wet the hair and comb through with a regular comb or brush to remove any tangles (it is easier to comb wet hair).
3. Separate the hair into small sections, about the width of the nit comb. Use the nit comb to comb each section of hair, starting at the scalp and moving to the tip of the hair. Comb each section several times from root to tip before moving on to a different section of hair.



- Head lice lay nits within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the scalp (about the thickness of a pencil), so it's important to get as close to the scalp as possible when combing. Nits that are found further away from the scalp are most likely already hatched or are dead.
 - If nits or lice are found while combing, remove them from the comb by rinsing the comb in a bowl of soapy water and wiping the comb dry with a paper towel or facial tissue before using again.
 - For people with short hair, sectioning the hair may not be possible. If that is the case, comb all the hair to the right, then to the left, and then from back to front. This should be repeated several times.
4. After a section of hair has been combed, use a clip or hair band to clip or tie the hair back. Then move on to the next section. Use a spray bottle to keep the hair damp or wet while you comb.



5. Once the hair has been combed through using the nit comb, sanitize or clean the clips and nit comb by soaking them in hot water ($>130^{\circ}\text{F}$) for 5–10 minutes. The towel, sheet, or any other pieces of clothing used during nit combing should be washed in hot water and then placed in a clothes dryer on the hot cycle.

Remember: Carefully inspect and comb the infested person's hair **every other day for 2 weeks**. This will help you find and remove any nits that you may have missed, or any new eggs that have been laid since you last combed the hair.

Actual Size:

Nits on Hair

Lice

