

dried in the hot cycle of the drier. Mattresses and upholstered furniture, carpets, pillows, etc. should be vacuumed thoroughly. Articles that cannot be washed may be dry cleaned or tightly sealed in a plastic bag for 10 days to 2 weeks before reuse.

## READMISSION TO SCHOOL

Children should return to school after the initial treatment and removal of all nits. A child need not be absent for more than 1 day. **Nits must be removed before readmission.**

## PREVENTING REOCCURRENCE OF HEAD LICE

- Learn to recognize signs of head louse infestation. **Treat Promptly.**
- **Notify others** - parents of child's friends, teachers, school nurses, group leaders, etc.
- *Do not* use personal items belonging to others - combs, hair brushes, towels, hats, clothing, etc.
- Avoid hanging hats and coats on the same hook with clothing belonging to others.

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*This brochure was developed by the Orange County Pediculosis Steering Committee, a cooperative effort of the Orange County Department of Education, Orange County Public Health, Orange County Vector Control District, and other educational and community representatives.*  
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## CLEARING UP COMMON MYTHS ABOUT HEAD LICE

- Personal cleanliness *does not* prevent head lice; anyone can get them.
- Head lice *cannot* jump or fly.
- Head lice *do not* live on dogs, cats, or other pets.
- Carpets and furniture *are not* favorable places for lice since they *do not* provide the warmth, food, and moisture needed for lice to survive.
- Solvents, kerosene, vinegar, etc. *do not* effectively dissolve the cement that holds nits to the hair.
- Head lice *are not* known to transmit diseases.

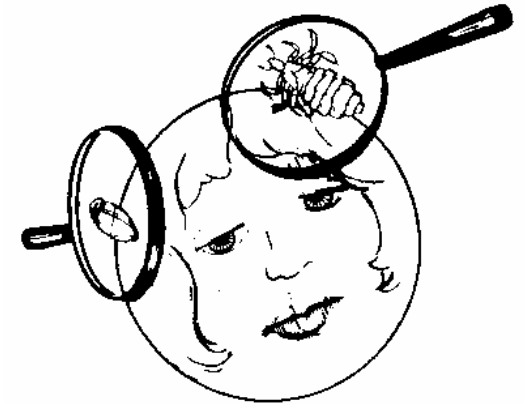


For more information call:

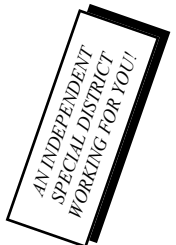
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# HEAD LICE

## DETECTION AND CONTROL



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# HEAD LICE \* DETECTION \* CONTROL

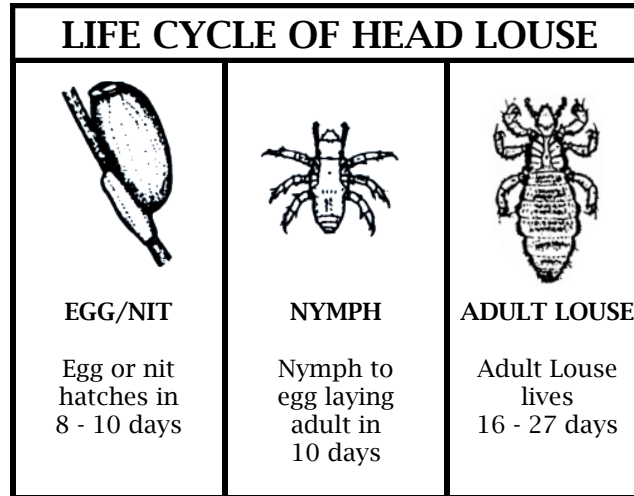
## WHAT ARE HEAD LICE ?

Head lice are insects that live on the human scalp and feed on blood. They exist in three forms: egg, nymph, and adult. While feeding, lice inject saliva into the skin which may cause itching.

The eggs, commonly called nits, are teardrop in shape, about this size ( ' ), and vary in color from off-white to yellowish brown. The nits are attached to the hair shaft with a waterproof, cement-like substance. Therefore, nits cannot be washed or brushed off like dandruff or other debris that sometimes looks like nits to the naked eye. Nits hatch in about 8 - 10 days.

The young nymph emerges from the egg and remains in the nymph stage 8 - 10 days before it reaches maturity. The nymph looks like an adult louse but cannot lay eggs.

Head lice are elongated insects approximately 1/8 inch in length. They are grayish-white with dark margins. At the end of each leg is a hook-like claw and an opposing thumb which enables the louse to maintain its hold on the hair. Lice do not have wings and therefore **cannot** fly. They do **not** jump, but do move quickly.



## HOW DO YOU GET HEAD LICE ?

Head lice are usually transmitted from one infested person to another by direct contact with the hair. Wearing infested garments (hat, hooded jackets, sweaters, etc.), using infested combs and hair brushes, and lying in infested bedding are other ways of getting head lice.

## SIGNS OF HEAD LICE

One telltale sign of head lice is itching of the scalp, sometimes accompanied by scratch marks which may become infected. Close inspection is necessary to see the nits; a hand lens and flashlight may be helpful. In checking the scalp, you should pay close attention to the back of the head and behind the ears where the hair is the thickest. Lice avoid light and may be difficult to find. The observance of nits alone is enough to tell you that treatment is needed.

## TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE

Shampoos made especially for killing lice are available without prescription at the drugstore or with prescription from your family doctor. It is very important to remember that these shampoos contain insecticides and are safe when used according to the directions on the label. While these shampoos kill the nymphs and adult lice, some nits may survive. Therefore, it is important to remove all of the nits from the hair shaft. This can be accomplished by combing the hair, while wet, with a specially designed fine tooth comb. Frequent cleaning of the comb during the combing process is important. These specially designed combs are made of plastic or metal and should be used according to the manufacturers' directions. The nits may also be removed by finger nails or tweezers. They should be destroyed by flushing down the toilet or by sealing in a container that can be placed in the trash.

After completing the treatment, combs and brushes should be disinfected. All other household members should be checked and treated if necessary, at the same time. The complete treatment should be repeated no sooner than 8 days, but not later than 10 days after the initial treatment. Any living nits that have been missed with the first treatment should have hatched. The second treatment will kill the newly hatched nymphs before they can reproduce.

Because lice can live off the body for 1-3 days, all articles that come in contact with the hair, such as combs, brushes, and similar items, should be disinfected by soaking in a 2% Lysol solution or the special shampoo for 1 hour or by heating in water to 140° F for 5 to 10 minutes. All clothing, towels, and bed liners should be machine washed in hot water and

*continued on next page*