



Health News

From The
DCF Medical Team

Head Lice, the bug that keeps on giving!

*And now that you have stopped scratching your head,
here are some important facts that you should know:*

What are head lice?

- ❖ Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that feed off human blood for survival.
- ❖ They mainly live on the scalp, base of neck, and in the eyebrows and eyelashes.
- ❖ They can lay up to six eggs per day. The eggs are called nits. Nits are tiny, grey, oval specks that resemble dandruff. They attach themselves to strands of hair close to the scalp.
- ❖ Unlike dandruff nits do not come off the hair strand easily.
- ❖ **Contrary to popular belief, head lice do not fly or jump and they do not burrow under the skin.**

How is head lice spread?

- ❖ Head lice is spread easily from person to person, and anyone can get head lice.
- ❖ Head lice crawl from infested person or object to person who is not infested.
- ❖ Coming into close contact or having contact with personal items of an infested person can spread lice. Personal items include combs, hairbrushes, hair accessories, hats, coats, dirty clothing, bedding and towels. Lice are often spread during playtime, when close contact occur, and also during sleepovers, and sharing of personal items.
- ❖ **Remember, pets cannot spread head lice, only humans.**

How can you treat head lice?

- ❖ Treatment requires the use of medicated shampoo, which can be purchased at the local pharmacy, there is also prescription strength shampoo, but these are usually only recommended for severe cases.
- ❖ Make sure to follow exact directions provided on the label.
- ❖ Important not to retreat too soon, usually re-treatment is done 7 to 10 days after initial treatment, unless otherwise specified by medical provider.
- ❖ Remember these chemicals can be toxic if misused.
- ❖ **Until a person has successfully completed treatment, they are still able to spread lice.**
- ❖ **Washing with shampoo, soap and water will not get rid of head lice.**
- ❖ Removing the nits requires a special comb and lots of patience.

What are other recommendations?

- ❖ All personal items must be treated also. This includes all bedding, clothing, toys, combs, brushes, hair accessories, etc.
- ❖ The items that can be washed need to be washed in very hot water and then dried on high heat.
- ❖ Any items that cannot be washed must be placed in sealed plastic bags for 2 to 3 weeks.
- ❖ Combs and brushes along with head accessories should be soaked in the medicated shampoo, usually for longer than 5 minutes
- ❖ All rugs, mattresses, and upholstered furniture must be vacuumed. Vacuum bag must be disposed of immediately. Recommend vacuuming daily until situation resolved.
- ❖ The above recommendations need to be done together, in order to successfully treat head lice. Treating the hair and not following the other recommendations will surely allow for reinfestation.
- ❖ **Checking all family members and treating infested ones is also a must.**
- ❖ Recheck hair in 7 days to determine if treatment successful, if nits still noticed, start treatment plan again.

For more information and for a treatment recommendation sheet please contact your regional nurse.

Reference: DPH Fact Sheet Head Lice.