

Cleaning Recommendations

- ✓ Change and wash all pillowcases and any bedding used by the affected individual. Treat family members who share a bed with the affected individual.
- ✓ Clean all brushes, combs and other hair items used by the affected individual.
- ✓ Only items in contact with the head of the affected person in the 24-48 hours prior to treatment need cleaning.
- ✓ Lice survival off the scalp beyond 48 hours is extremely unlikely.

REFERENCES:

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

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

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full.html>

Pediculosis or Head Lice

Marin School Nurses Organization



Head lice are a common problem in school-age children. Head lice are treatable and do not carry any disease. Any person regardless of age, sex, or socioeconomic status can get head lice.

Attention & Treatment

- * Head
- * Personal Items
- * Household

How to identify Lice, Eggs & Nits

* The adult head louse is less than 1/8in. long “about the size of a sesame seed”. Lice are brown to grey in color and have 6 legs. Their eggs are tiny and brown and camouflage to match the infected person’s hair.

*Head lice are spread from one person to another by direct head-to-head contact.

*Lice eggs are laid on the hair shaft very close to the scalp, within 1cm (1/4inch) of the scalp. The eggs are firmly attached with a glue-like substance produced by the louse.

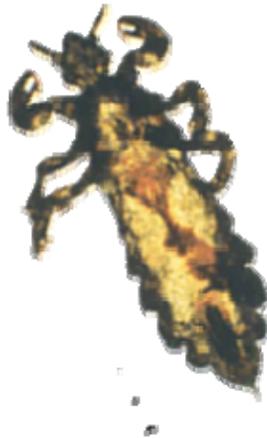
*Empty egg cases are left behind after the lice have hatched. They appear white against darker hair and can be seen farther down the hair shaft.

*The term “nits “ can refer to either empty egg cases or eggs.

*Contracting lice from sharing a classroom rug, clothing, hats, combs or brushes is not likely because lice do not survive long off the human head. When lice do leave the human head, they are often damaged and not capable of attaching to another head.

Diagnosis

- The best way to diagnose head lice is to find a live louse on the head.
- Examine the child in natural light if possible, dividing the hair into small sections. Use a fine-toothed nit comb or flea comb to comb hair up from the scalp. A magnifier may be helpful.
- If one person in the household has been diagnosed with head lice, check everyone in that household for live lice or eggs within 1cm (1/4 inch) of the scalp.



Treatment

- Anyone with head lice must be treated with a recommended shampoo before returning to school.
- Most lice treatment products do not kill lice eggs so re-treatment or **diligent removal of eggs is necessary**. Nonprescription treatments approved by the US Food and Drug (FDA) include Permethrin 1% (Nix) and Perethrin (RID). Some health professionals recommend re-treatment in 7-10 days or if live lice are seen. Check with your medical provider.
- Resistance to Permethrin has been reported in California. If live lice remain after initial treatment consult your medical provider or school nurse. Prescription products are available.
- Eggs and empty egg casings **must** be removed from the hair shaft. With your fingers hold onto egg casings and slide all the way off the hair shaft, or pull the hair with the nit out by the root. You can also use scissors to snip the hair off with the attached egg or egg casing. It is important not to confuse eggs with dandruff or dirt that will easily flake off the hair. The eggs and egg casings are **firmly attached** to the hair shaft, but dandruff or dirt will flake off if the hair is moved or blown on.
- Manually remove eggs within ¼ inch of the scalp after treatment. Nit combs are very helpful in this process. Recheck for live lice in one week.

