

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Parent Information Packet

Tuscaloosa County Schools
Health Services

10 Steps To Staying Ahead of Lice

1. Watch for signs of head lice, such as frequent head scratching. Anyone can get head lice... mainly by head-to-head contact but also from sharing hats, brushes and headrests. Lice do not jump or fly.
2. Check all family members for lice and nits (lice eggs) at least once a week. Only those infested should be treated. Lice are reddish-brown wingless insects, nits are grayish-white, always oval shaped, and are glued at an angle to the side of the hair shaft.
3. Be sure not to confuse nits with hair debris such as bright irregularly shaped clumps of dandruff stuck to the hair shaft or elongated segments of dandruff encircling the hair shaft and easily dislodged. Lice treatment is not appropriate for hair debris.
4. Consult your pharmacist or physician before applying or using lice treatment pesticides when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, has pre-existing medical conditions, or has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. Never use a pesticide on or near the eyes.
5. If you choose to purchase an over-the-counter treatment, follow the directions carefully and use with caution. If the product fails, do not switch to other over-the-counter treatments. This can be potentially harmful. Manual Removal is the safe alternative and a necessary component to any head lice treatment regimen.
6. Follow package directions carefully. Use the product over the sink, not in the tub or shower. Always keep the eyes covered.
7. **Remove all nits.** This assures total lice treatment. Separate hair in sections and remove all attached nits with a lice comb, baby safety scissors, or your fingernails.
8. Machine wash bedding, recently worn clothing, backpacks, nap mats, and winter outerwear (hats, coats, scarves, gloves) in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Combs and brushes may be soaked in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.
9. **Avoid lice sprays!** Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats.
10. Notify your child's school, camp, and child care provider. Check for lice on a regular basis. This is the best way to protect your family and community.

Source: The National Pediculosis Association®, Inc.

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

There are three (3) steps in treating head lice:

1. KILL THE LICE.

- If you do not understand the instructions or you have any problems providing the necessary treatment, please contact the school.
- Carefully read and follow product directions. Do not use too much or too little of the product.
- Do not treat family members who do not have lice.
- If your child has asthma or has any allergies then call your doctor for advice on how to treat your child for head lice.
- Do not use lice products on infants, pregnant or nursing mothers. Call your doctor for advice.
- Do not treat pets. Head lice cannot survive on pets.
- Apply lice killing products to dry hair. Apply as the child leans over the sink. Do not apply in a bathtub or shower.
- Avoid exposing the rest of the child's body to the lice killing products.
- Provide a towel to cover eyes. Do not use lice killing products near the eyes.

2. REMOVE THE NITS.

- Although it takes time and is usually difficult, remove **all nits** for complete treatment. Dead nits cling to the hair and cause uncertainty about new lice.
- Most products do not kill all the nits. Survivors will hatch into crawling lice within 7-10 days, creating a cycle of new lice.
- A fine-toothed comb is helpful, but many nits will have to be stripped from the hair by using your fingers to slide them off the hair shaft.
- Settle your child in a chair to read a book or watch a video when removing the nits.
- Place nits into a plastic bag. Secure the bag tightly before placing into the garbage.
- If nits are slid off the hair into tissues, they can be flushed down the toilet.
- Nits can also be snipped off each hair strand with blunt scissors. However, it is not necessary to cut a child's hair.
- Most lice killing products require a second treatment in 7-10 days to kill any newly hatched lice before they mature and reproduce.
- Check your child's hair daily for nits/lice for several weeks after treatment.

3. CLEAN THE ENVIRONMENT (HOME/CAR).

- Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have come in contact with the infested person during the last 3 days. Articles should be washed in **HOT** water and dried in a **HOT** dryer. Non-washables should be dry cleaned.
- Combs and brushes should be soaked in a lice-killing shampoo for 1 hour and then rinsed in **HOT** water.
- Articles that cannot be washed or dry cleaned can be sealed in plastic bags for 14 days and then removed and dusted for any dead nits/lice.
- Rugs, upholstered furniture, and mattresses (and any other personal items that cannot be washed) should be carefully vacuumed to pick up any living lice or nits attached to fallen hairs.
- Insecticide sprays should not be used because they may be harmful to family members and pets and are of questionable benefit.
- Vacuum and damp mop interiors of cars and infant seats.
- Tell your friends, school officials, and all activity site personnel (sports teams, gymnastics, etc.) about the infestation so that other parents can be alerted to a possible outbreak. Parental cooperation will help control this problem.

Ten Tips for Head Lice & Nit Removal

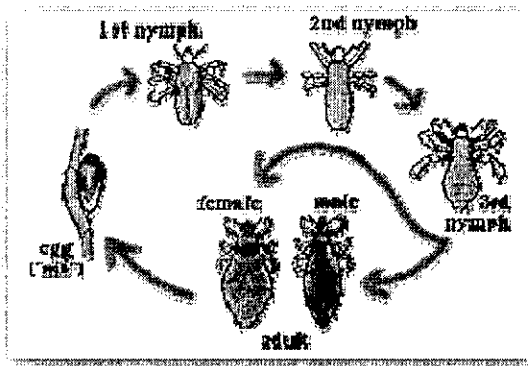
1. Work under a good light, such as a lamp or the natural sunlight from sitting by a window or going outdoors.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles then divide the hair in sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.
3. Use a lice comb to detect the presence of lice and nits.
4. Using a lice comb, go through the section from the scalp to the end of the hair. You can dip the comb into a cup of water, use a paper towel, or use a lice comb cleaning device to remove any lice, nits or debris from the comb between each passing.
5. Look through that same section of hair for attached nits (lice eggs) and live lice. Nits are always oval-shaped. While usually grayish-white they can vary in color. Viable nits are generally laid close to the scalp but can be found anywhere on the hair shaft.
6. Remember, all lice-killing products are pesticides. Follow the directions carefully and use with caution. Consult your pharmacist or physician before applying or using lice treatment pesticides when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, pre-existing medical conditions, or has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. Never use a pesticide on or near the eyes.
7. Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats. Avoid lice sprays!
8. A re-usable lice comb should be boiled before use on different individuals.
9. Even under the best of conditions, a few lice or nits may be missed. Screen the infested person every day and regularly thereafter. Seeing a nit or two the next day does not necessarily mean re-infestation. However, be sure to remove them immediately. Being consistent and diligent about screening and manual removal will go a long way toward controlling the problem.
10. If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, this may signal that live lice may be on the head. Another thorough manual search is recommended at that time. Remember also that each day is a new day for the risk of a new infestation. Daily screening is vital for anything that may have been missed and for identifying a new infestation as early as possible.

Source: The National Pediculosis Association®, Inc.

Lousology 101

Biology of Head Lice

Which Came First... the Itchin' or the Egg?



(The Life-Cycle of the Head Louse)

- Nits (the eggs of the head louse) are small yellowish-white, oval-shaped eggs that are "to the side of a hair shaft glued" at an angle
 - Nits must be laid by live lice. You cannot "catch nits."
 - Once laid, it takes 7-10 days for a nit to hatch, and another 7-10 days for the female to mature and begin laying her own eggs.
 - Head lice are clear in color when hatched, then quickly develop a reddish-brown color after feeding.
 - Head lice are about the size of sesame seeds.
 - Head lice have six legs equipped with claws to grasp the hair.
 - Head lice are crawling insects. They cannot hop, jump, or fly.
 - Head lice do not thrive on pets.
- Head lice are small, wingless insects which feed on human blood. They need human blood in order to survive.
 - Head lice live for approximately 30 days on a host and a female louse may lay up to 100 nits (eggs).
 - Head lice off of their human hosts will starve. The NPA suggests that, in most cases, a head louse will not survive for more than 24 hours off of its human host.

Lots of people have misconceptions about lice and the people who get them. Head lice can affect anyone: rich or poor, young or old, male or female. An outbreak of head lice in your family does not mean you are a bad housekeeper or you don't bathe. It does mean loss of school for kids, loss of work time for parents, and the often the misuse of potentially harmful pesticide treatments.

The sooner the nits (louse eggs) and head lice are detected, the easier and quicker it is to control and remove them...because they multiply quickly. We recommend you screen your child(ren) regularly as a part of routine hygiene.

Parents who routinely screen their children for lice are being responsible members of their community. Lice enjoy grown-up heads too, so it is important for parents to take time to screen themselves.

Teach your child(ren) not to share combs, hats, or brushes. Screening your child for lice teaches responsible personal health behaviors...just like brushing teeth and washing hands.

Tuscaloosa County School Health Services

Date _____

Dear Parent of _____,

As a part of routine checks for head lice in the school today, your child was found to have nits (lice eggs) and/or lice. Anyone can get head lice. Head lice are passed from person-to-person by physical contact or by sharing objects. It has nothing to do with cleanliness.

Your child should be treated at once with a shampoo **especially designed for head lice** and recommended by your doctor or pharmacist for use on your child. Carefully follow the directions included with the product.

Please read the attached **Parent Information Sheet**. If you do not know what to look for please ask school personnel to show you how to identify nits or head lice. Everyone living in the home should also be treated, if they have lice or nits. DO NOT use these products on a pregnant woman, nursing mother, or an infant.

Your child cannot attend school until after he/she has been properly treated and nits have been removed. A fine-toothed comb is helpful, but many nits will have to be stripped from the hair by using your fingers to slide them off the hair shaft.

Those students who are given proper treatment and are free of lice and/or nits are permitted to return to school the next day. Students will be allowed up to three (3) consecutive days of excused absences for the first occurrence of head lice/nits. Any additional absences during the school year due to head lice/nits will be unexcused.

You must accompany your child to the school office before he/she can be readmitted to the classroom. Your child cannot ride the bus or attend class until a school official has cleared him/her. Thank you for your cooperation in addressing this problem. It is our goal to keep all of our children healthy and attending school. *Please call the school if you have any questions regarding your child's treatment for head lice.*

Sincerely,

(LCP-1)