

# HEAD LICE INFORMATION

Head lice are small wingless insects which need human warmth to survive. The nits (eggs) are found stuck to the hair close to the scalp. The nits are seen more often than the lice. Usually, the head lice and nits can be seen by the naked eye, however, a flashlight or magnifying glass may help to detect the problem. Itching is a major symptom of infestation. They are communicable and spread quickly.

Perhaps the following information will be helpful to you in detecting and/or treating your child for infestation:

- Check your child's head carefully. Watch the areas at the nape of the neck and around the ears, as these places are most commonly affected.
- Check other family members for possible infestation.
- The head louse is a small black or brown insect which crawls on the scalp. They do not hop or jerk. The nits are grayish-white in color and are found stuck to the hair close to the scalp. The nits are seen more often than the lice themselves. The nits hatch in seven days.
- Itching is a major symptom of infestation. If a child is scratching his/her head, and especially if he/she has scratches or a rash about the scalp, he/she should be checked thoroughly.
- A small wooden stick (pencil) should be used to part the hair. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after checking.

If you have any questions concerning the detection, care, and treatment of head lice, please call your School Nurse or contact your physician.

## TREATMENT GUIDELINES

It is essential that both the child and his/her clothing, personal articles and home environment be treated in order to kill lice and nits and prevent re-infestation. All family members should be checked for lice and nits and treated if any are seen.

There are several treatments available. Follow directions on product container.

### Steps in Treatment with Rinse

Apply product (rinse or lice shampoo) directly to dry hair. Adults are not killed if hair is wet first.

### Cleaning of Personal Articles and the Home

- 1) Machine wash in hot water all washable clothing and bed linens which have come in contact with the infested person(s) in the previous three days. Dry in a clothes dryer on high heat for at least 20 minutes.
- 2) Dry-clean clothes which are not washable (wool coats, hats, etc.).

- 3) Items which are not washable can also be placed in sealed plastic bags for 2 weeks. Pillows, dolls, and stuffed toys should be treated in this manner.
- 4) Wash all combs and brushes in the medicated shampoo or soak in alcohol or Lysol for one hour.
- 5) Vacuum mattress, pillows, stuffed furniture, carpeting, and seats of car. Then throw away the vacuum bag.
- 6) Sprays are not necessary.

## TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE

Head lice live on the human scalp and only on humans. They do not live on pets. Lice live by biting and sucking blood from the human scalp. Lice will feed for 45 seconds about every 2-3 hours, each leaving between 8-12 bites in the course of one day.

The eggs of head lice are called nits. They are very tiny (0.8mm) and are a pearly or creamy color. The female attaches the nits to the hair with a glue-like substance that makes it very difficult to remove the nits. Eggs hatch in about a week to 10 days. An adult louse can live up to 30 days and during that time can lay up to 300 eggs. If untreated, 90% of those eggs will hatch. The louse can live up to two days off of a human scalp.

All family members should be examined for lice. Sometimes adults do not have themselves checked if they are having no symptoms. Studies have shown that treatment is more likely to be successful when everyone in the home is treated for lice as opposed to only those infested being treated.

Lice treatment should be done by an adult! Do not ask the child to do it if you really want to be sure of effective treatment.

There are many different non-prescription lice treatments.

### STEPS IN TREATMENT

1. DO NOT wet or shampoo hair before treatment..
2. The lice treatment will be ineffective if the hair is wet because the adults close their breathing tubes on wet hair.
3. Cover the child's eyes with a towel and make sure eyes are tightly closed. If any of the medication gets in the eyes, rinse immediately with tap water.
4. Apply the treatment undiluted to hair until the entire scalp is covered. Leave on for 10 minutes and then rinse out.
5. TOWEL DRY HAIR.
6. Comb hair with a nit comb to remove dead lice and nits. Make sure you have a good nit comb with very fine teeth. A metal lice comb works much better than the plastic one that comes with the treatment medication. This is the step that many parents fail to do completely.

NO LICE TREATMENT KILLS 100% OF NITS, SO ALL NITS MUST BE REMOVED TO PREVENT THEM FROM HATCHING AND REINFESTING THE CHILD.

### STEPS IN TREATMENT

1. Apply shampoo to dry hair. Cover scalp and hair completely.
2. Follow steps 3-6 as above and re-treat in 7 to 10 days.

### COMBING OUT NITS

1. Part hair into four sections and fasten with clips or rubber bands.
2. Doing one section at a time, take a 1" wide strand of hair and place the teeth of the lice comb as close to the scalp as possible. Pull the comb firmly from scalp to end of hair strand. You may use your fingernails to remove any nits which won't comb off. Rinse comb after combing each strand of hair. Continue until you have combed each strand of each section.
3. If the hair dries out before you finish, dampen with water.
4. After combing the entire head, rinse thoroughly.
5. When hair is dry, recheck entire head and remove any remaining nits.
6. Have child put on clean clothes that cannot possibly have been exposed to lice.

Remember, no lice treatment is 100% effective, so treatment may need to be repeated in a week.

### OTHER THINGS TO DO

1. Treat all combs, brushes, caps, headbands and hair bows. Wash and remove all hairs. Combs and brushes can be soaked in Lysol or in the treatment medication for a day.
2. Inspect fingernails -- your child's and your own -- and clean to remove nits which may have gotten under the nails from scratching or while treating.
3. Wash all bed linens in hot water and put in the dryer for at least 20 minutes. Wash and dry all clothing, coats, hats, etc., that the child has come into contact with. Non-washable clothes and items should be dry-cleaned or put into plastic trash bags and sealed up for two weeks.
4. Vacuum all carpeting, upholstered furniture, seats of cars and mattresses and then throw away the vacuum bag to get it out of your house.

Special sprays for treatment of the environment can also be purchased. However, these sprays should not be necessary if the above procedures are followed carefully.

Nix has been approved for infants down to two months old. However, NEVER use Nix or any other lice treatment medication on an infant or pregnant or nursing woman without first asking your physician.