

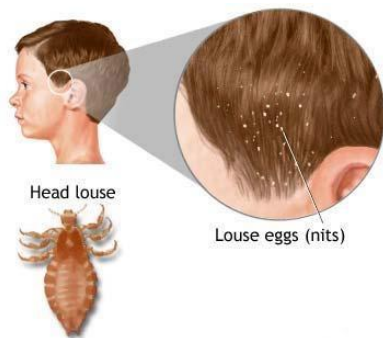
## Lice Terms

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**Nits** - Nits are head lice eggs. They are hard to see and are often confused for dandruff or hair spray droplets. Nits are laid by the adult female and are cemented at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. They will not move like dandruff will – nits are “glued” to the hair shaft. They are oval and usually yellow to white. Nits take about 1 week to hatch. Viable eggs are usually located within ¼ inch of the scalp.

**Nymph** - The egg hatches to release a nymph (baby louse). The nit shell then becomes a more visible dull yellow and remains attached to the hair shaft. The nymph looks like an adult head louse, but is about the size of a pinhead. Nymphs mature and become adults about 7 days after hatching.

**Louse** - The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has 6 legs, and is tan to grayish-white. In persons with dark hair, the adult louse will appear darker. Females are usually larger than males and can lay up to 8 nits per day. Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person’s head. To live, adult lice need to feed on blood several times daily. Without blood meals, the louse will die within 1 to 2 days off the host.



# Lice

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A Guide to Treatment and Prevention



## Lice Facts

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Head lice is a parasitic infestation of bugs found on the head/scalp of people. Head lice are not known to spread disease and are not dangerous. Head lice cause itchiness of the scalp, although scratching is not always seen. Scratching can cause skin break down, making children at risk for bacterial infections of the scalp.

Live lice lay eggs (nits), which hatch in approximately 7-10 days. The newly hatched nymphs mature into adult louse approximately 9-12 days later. Once they are adults, the louse can lay eggs and the cycle starts again.

- Having lice says nothing about personal hygiene
- They only live on human heads – pets will not get infested
- Head lice move by crawling; they cannot jump or fly
- They are spread through direct contact with the hair of an infested person

## Treatment

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There are many options for treatment of lice. Please consult your pediatrician for their recommended treatment method. Some parents have found the use of local companies, over-the-counter treatments, lice combs, and nit-picking to be effective means of treatment.

Whichever method you choose, it is important to continue to check the scalp for signs of live lice or nits for at least 14 days after treatment. Removal of all live lice and nits is essential to treatment.

### Do I need to treat other family members?

If a member of your household has been infested with lice, it is wise to check all family members for live lice or nits, and treat them the same way.

### Do I need to treat my house?

Lice cannot live off the human head longer than 48 hrs, so whole-house treatment (such as a fogger) is not necessary. However, the following areas should be cleaned:

- Wash bed linens and any clothing worn in the last 2 days in hot water and dry on high heat for 20-30 min. Items unable to be washed may be sealed in a plastic bags for 48 hours.
- Hair brushes/combs may be placed in the dishwasher or in boiling water for 5-10 min.
- While it is unlikely there are lice on upholstery or carpet, vacuuming is your choice

### Are my pets going to get it?

No, lice only live on a human scalp. Your pets will not get it, and they will not need to be treated. They cannot carry or transmit lice.

### What's the school policy?

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Ashland Public Schools clinical guidelines state that students may be sent home for treatment of live lice at the nurse's discretion. Students need to have evidence of treatment before returning to school.

## Prevention

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Lice are a common problem, especially in children. Prevention is key!

- Teach young children to give “high fives” to friends, rather than hugs
- When girls have longer hair, it is helpful to have their hair in a ponytail, braid, or bun to minimize contact with other people's hair
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels
- Avoid head-to-head contact during play, sporting activities, camp, church, slumber parties, selfies, etc.

