

Head Lice Fact Sheet

How do I know if my child has head lice and if so, how did they get it?

1. Itching is the first sign of head lice, unless your child has a very light case. Check your child's head and scalp all over and especially behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the neck when scratching begins.
2. Look for lice and their eggs or "nits." You may see the nits before you find a louse because each louse can lay up to 150 at a time.
3. You may first find lice or nits on the hairs at the "nape" of the neck (back of the head where the hair stops and the neck begins) and behind the ears. But, they can live anywhere; so look all over the scalp.
4. If you know of another child with head lice, be alert that your child may contract lice too. There is no incubation period. When live lice move from one child's head to another, they are "home" and can begin laying eggs immediately.
5. Children get head lice almost as much as the common cold. Millions get it at least one time, once a year.



6. Children get lice from other children. They move from child to child through head to head contact.

7. Lice cannot hop, jump, or fly, but can crawl from child to child anytime children are close together; during play or sports or even nap time.

8. Sharing combs, brushes, hair fasteners, hats, caps, coats, neck scarves and even head phones spread them too. Sharing a locker or cubbyhole with a lice infested child is a common way to spread lice. If left behind, lice can attach to your child while sitting on carpets or furniture. Lice can even attach to stuffed toys.

9. Children get lice more than teens or adults. ANY child can get head lice! It doesn't matter where they live or go to school, how much money they have, boy or girl.

10. A child isn't sick or unclean if they have head lice. Taking baths won't kill lice or keep children from getting lice. If a child has head lice, it certainly doesn't mean they have bad parents.

11. Dealing with lice is difficult, sometimes embarrassing and can be overwhelming to anyone caring for children.

Medications that are FDA approved for head lice treatments, whether prescription or over-the-counter are safe and effective for children over the age of two. For children younger than two, check with your physician.

The Centers for Disease control and Prevention's Web site on head lice has more information about the specific medications found in head lice products. Go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/default.htm for this and other information.

