

Head Lice FAQ

Harmony & Health

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Quality Products for Health

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What are head lice?

- Head lice are wingless obligate parasitic insects that live in the hair and on the scalp.
- They are ~1-3mm in length with a flattened body and six legs, each leg having an enlarged "claw" used to cling to the hair shaft.
- They are generally grayish-brown to black in color.
- They feed using a hollow tube-like device known as a proboscis (similar to the way a mosquito feeds) or by breaking the skin and feeding from the small pool of blood that collects.
- They will die if they do not have a "blood meal" within 48 hours.
- They cannot jump or fly and do not live on pets.
- They are not a sign of unsanitary living conditions and infest the wealthy and the poor alike.

How do you get lice?

- lice are passed through direct and indirect head-to-head contact with an infested person,
- By sharing combs/brushes, headbands, barrettes, clothing, hats, ribbons, etc.
- By placing clothing in a common area, such as a closet, with clothing of an infested person.
- By sharing bedding, towels, pillows, stuffed animals, etc.
- While rare, people can become infested from seats in airplanes, trains, buses, movie theaters, etc.

What are the signs/symptoms?

- Itching of the scalp, particularly around the ears and nape of the neck.
- Sores around the ears and nape of the nape may develop an inflamed look and may become infected (generally by the microbes introduced from our fingernails during scratching).
- Visually, by finding crawling lice or nits (eggs) on hair shaft 1/4 inch of the scalp.

My child has lice. What do I do now?

- First thing is don't panic. Lice are a nuisance, but they are not a serious medical problem.
- Wash hair with a Tea Tree Oil Shampoo (or product of choice).
- **Comb thoroughly** with a fine-tooth comb and wash any bedding and stuffed animals using hot water and high heat dryer setting. (May place non-washables in a bag for at least two weeks.). Combs brushes and other hair accessories may be place in a bowl of hot soapy water (130 F).
- Cover hair (rubbing into scalp) with olive oil or coconut oil over night with a shower cap.
- Wash hair again (dishwashing liquid may help to cut through oil) and rinse with apple cider vinegar.
- Dry hair with as hot of heat as you/child can stand without burning. (Do not use with Chemical lice treatments)
- **Comb thoroughly** again with a fine-tooth comb removing **all** lice and nits.
- **Repeat** process in 7-9 to kill any missed nits and before 10 before adults' lay eggs.

Is there anything else I should do?

- You should notify the school, preschool or daycare center that your child attends to prevent a broader infestation or reinfestation of your own child. Try to eliminate your child's source of infestation.
- Check children weekly to catch infestation early and share the importance of not sharing hair products.

Important: This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended for diagnosing or treating diseases. If you have a serious illness, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before beginning a course of treatment.



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