

# HOW TO AVOID A 'HAIR RAISING' EXPERIENCE



- Watch for signs of head lice. **Check your children every few days.** Lice are easier to eliminate if caught early.
- Teach your children not to share hats, headgear, scarves, headphones and grooming items (combs, hairbrushes, etc.) and to avoid direct head-to-head contact.
- To kill lice on bedding, clothes, etc., wash and dry them as you would ordinarily. **NEVER add any pesticide.** Vacuum materials that cannot be washed.
- If you are concerned about head lice on carpets or furniture, vacuum them thoroughly or wipe smooth surfaces with a damp cloth.
- Wash stuffed animals or vacuum them thoroughly. **NEVER spray them with a pesticide.**
- To kill lice on brushes, combs or hair accessories, wash them with hot, soapy water. **NEVER spray them with a pesticide.**

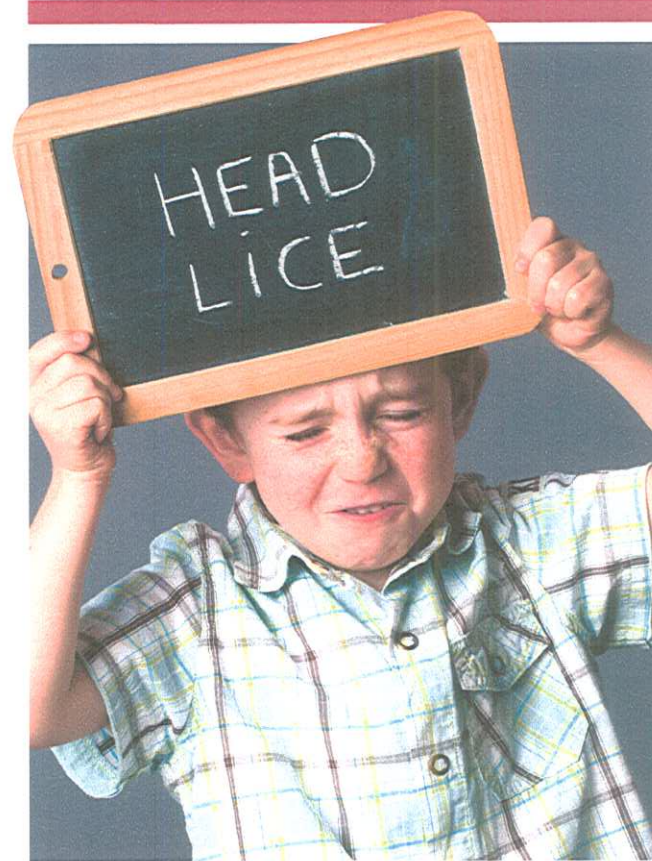
# 10 Tips for manual removal

1. Work in a well lighted area or use a flashlight and hand lens.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles. A hair detangler spray or other hair conditioner may aid in this process.
3. Divide the hair into sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.
4. Use a lice comb to detect and remove lice and nits. See figure 1 and figure 2 in this brochure.
5. Go through hair sections from the scalp to the end of the hair. Nits are usually found close to the scalp.
6. Dip the comb in a cup of hot, soapy water or use tape to remove lice, nits or debris from the comb.
7. Sift through the same section of hair and look for attached nits and live lice.
8. Move on to the next section until the entire scalp and all hair has been checked.
9. Screen the infested person every day for 10 days and regularly thereafter.
10. If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, another manual search is recommended.

**"Manual removal is the safe alternative and necessary component of any head lice treatment regimen."** –National Pediculosis Association

You can completely control a head lice infestation with manual removal alone. You **cannot** completely control head lice with head lice shampoos alone. **You must combine shampoo treatment with manual removal.**

# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE 'NITTY-GRITTY' ABOUT HEAD LICE



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# Head Lice 101: THE BASICS



Head louse  
*Pediculus capitis*

**Do not panic!** Head lice are not an emergency and, in most cases, do not pose any health risk. **However, misuse of pesticides and use of unlabeled treatments (ex., kerosene) can pose a health risk.**

Head lice **cannot** live off a human host for more than 24-48 hours.  
Head lice **cannot** live on pets.  
Head lice **cannot** reproduce in carpets, furniture or other household furnishings.

**Pesticide sprays do little or nothing to control lice. Never treat your home, car, furniture, beds, pillows, or clothing with pesticides** (e.g. 'lice bombs,' flea bombs, sprays, etc.) in an attempt to control head lice. You will expose yourself and your family to unnecessary pesticide risk.

## Signs of head lice:

- frequent head scratching
- complaints of itchy scalp/head
- redness behind ears or on the back of the neck

Head lice can affect people of any socioeconomic background and ethnicity. They do not imply a lack of hygiene or cleanliness of the infested person.

**If your school sprays rooms, buses, furniture, etc., to control head lice, ask them to stop immediately.** Refer your school to the Cooperative Extension brochure entitled *A School's Guide to the 'Nitty-Gritty' About Head Lice*.

**Head lice are very common among all classes of people.**

More than 12 million people, mostly children and school personnel, get head lice per year.

Direct head-to-head contact with an infested person is the main way head lice are transmitted, but they may also be transmitted by sharing hats, scarves, headphones, combs and other hair accessories.

**Lice cannot hop, jump, or fly, but they can crawl rapidly.**

Head lice are small, wingless parasitic insects. They are typically 1/6 - 1/8 inch long, brownish in color with darker margins. The claws on the end of each of their six legs are well adapted to grasping a hair strand.

**A child cannot 'catch nits.'**  
**Nits (lice eggs) can only be laid by live lice.**

Female head lice glue their grayish-white to brown eggs (nits) securely to hair shafts. The eggs are resistant to pesticides, and they are difficult to remove without a special 'nit-comb.' The nits are generally near the scalp, but they may be found anywhere on the hair shaft.



Nits (lice eggs)  
*photo courtesy of the University of Florida.*

**The best treatment for head lice is manual removal (see '10 tips for manual removal' in this brochure).**

If a lice shampoo is warranted, ask your doctor or pharmacist for specifics on the product and **follow all label instructions exactly. Misapplications can be ineffective and dangerous as well.**

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# Head Lice Facts

- Head lice are common among all classes of people.
- You can completely control a head lice infestation with manual removal alone. You cannot completely control head lice with head lice shampoos alone. You must combine shampoo treatment with manual removal.

(University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences  
<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C851>)

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Most cases of head lice are acquired outside of the school.
- Head lice cause no medical harm.
- Head lice are transmitted by head-to-head contact.

(University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences  
<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C851>)

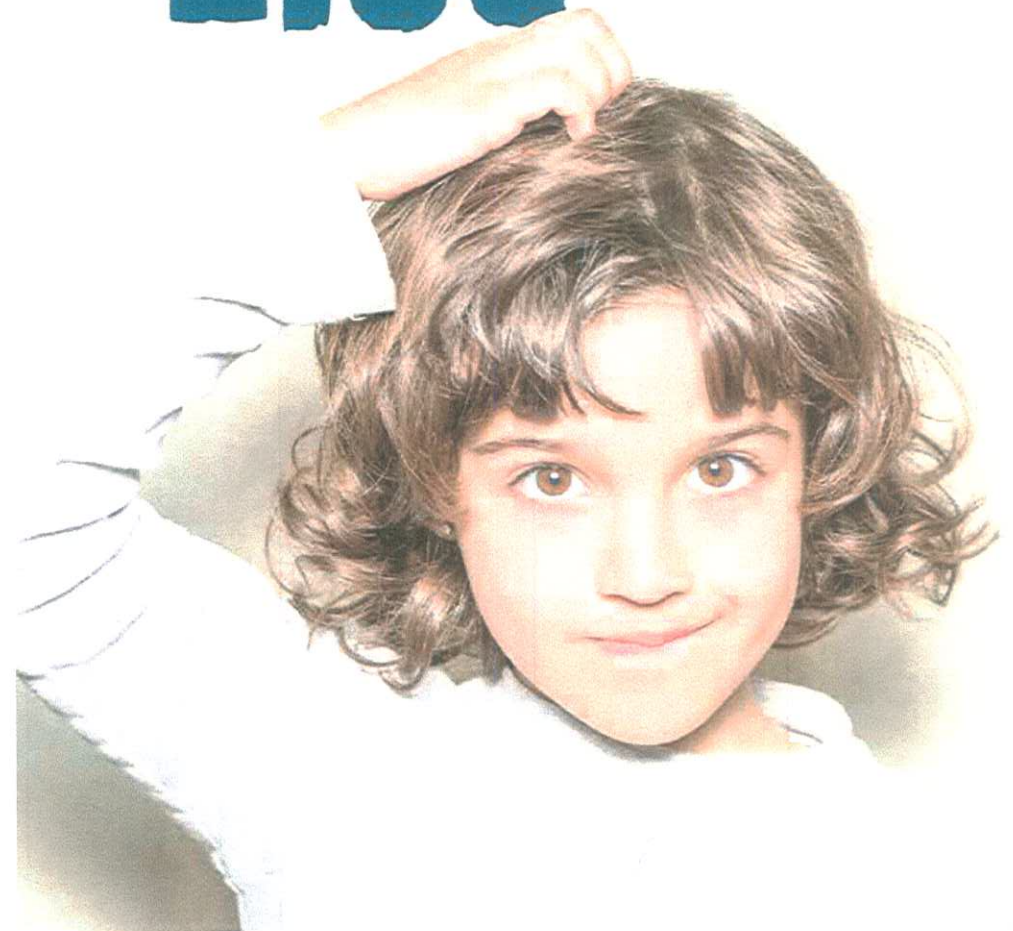
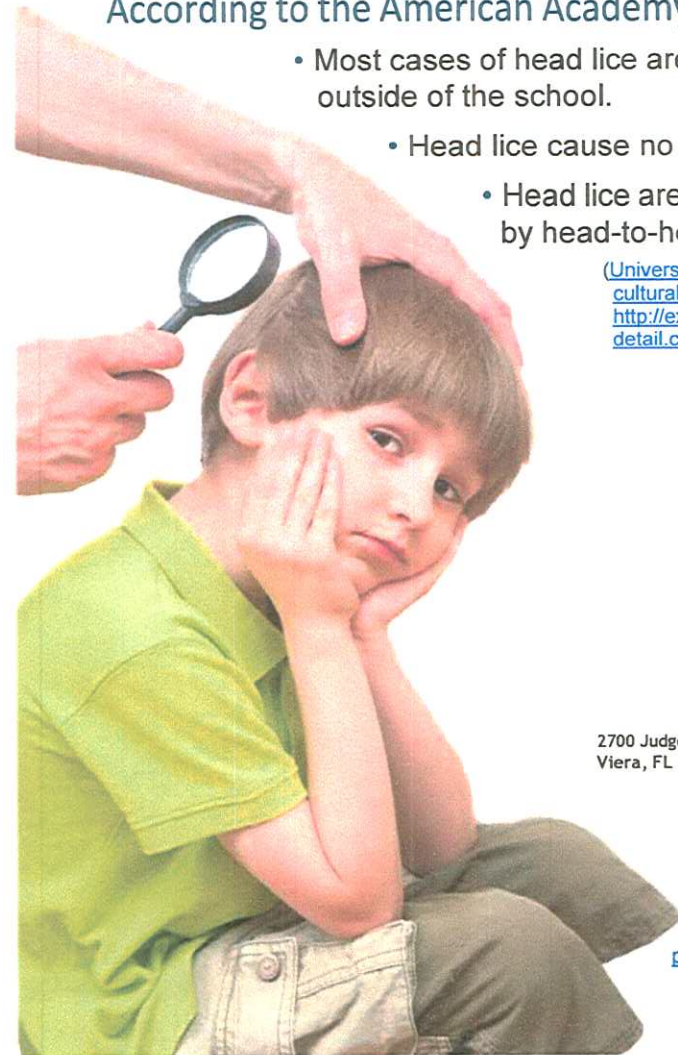
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Taken with permission from <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/prevent.html>

# Head Lice

Facts and  
prevention





## Head Lice Prevention and Control



Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. However, much less frequently they are spread by

sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice have crawled or nits attached to shed hairs may have fallen. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1–2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

The following are steps that can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:



Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.

Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry

cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.



Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).



Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid reinfestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.

Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.

Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.



Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.