

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Head Lice

Head Lice (*pediculus humanus capitis*) are insects found on heads of people. Head lice live only on humans. They live on the hairs of the head especially behind the ears and back of the head. They cannot fly or jump but only crawl. Head lice are not a health hazard. They do not spread disease. Head lice move from one person's head to another in the following ways: head to head contact, sharing hair brushes, combs, hats, towels, clothing or bedding with someone who has lice.

To avoid head lice from spreading, teach children not to touch or play with each other's hair. They should also not share combs, brushes, pillows, hats, towels, coats or other clothing. Following these simple rules will greatly reduce the spread of head lice.

Head lice are treatable. Various shampoos (pediculicides) are available over the counter without a doctor's order. Directions need to be followed according to individual products. Combs and hairbrushes should be soaked in hot water for 5 minutes or washed with lice shampoo. Disinfecting furniture and insecticide sprays are not necessary or recommended.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov.

Cut along line and return bottom portion to school clinic

This statement is to verify that I treated my child for head lice. I understand I must accompany my child to the clinic for readmission to school and he/she will be checked by clinic staff or school administration for proof there are no live lice.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date

HD 312E (rev 7-19)

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.**

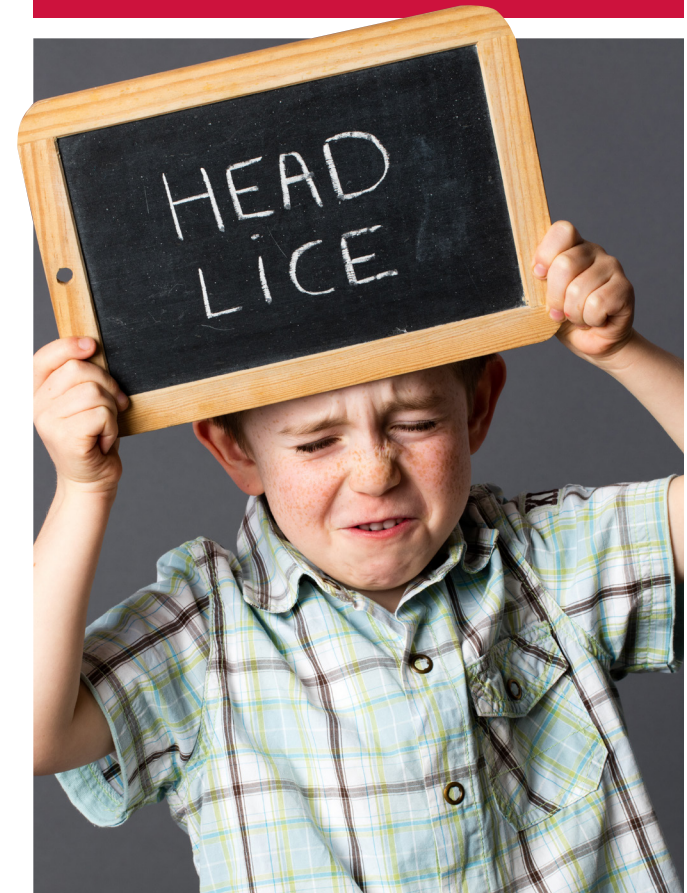
10 Tips for manual removal

1. Work in a well lighted area or use a flashlight and hand lens.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to re move 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



Paul Guillebeau and Gretchen Van De Mark
Department of Entomology

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 bobs, 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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