

# PARENT'S GUIDE TO HEAD LICE

## What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that only live on humans. They live in the hair close to the scalp and feed on blood. Lice glue their eggs, or "nits" to hair.



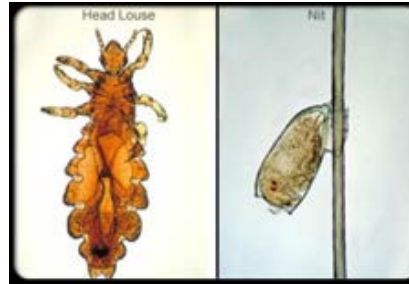
## How do you get head lice?

There are millions of cases of lice each year in the United States, mostly among children ages 3 to 11. Head lice do not jump, fly, or hop. They are spread through direct head-to-head contact, and less often by sharing combs, hats, clothing, headphones, or other personal items. Children are much more likely to get lice from family members and playmates than from classmates at school.

Prevent ■ Identify ■ Treat

## Life Cycle and Development

Adult female lays eggs (nits) on hair



In about 7 days, eggs hatch into nymphs

Nymphs mature into egg-laying adults about 7 days after hatching



## What do I look for?

Look through the hair, especially at the back of the head and behind the ears. Lice are difficult to see because they hide and blend in with the hair, so look for eggs which are yellowish-white and close to the scalp. **Don't confuse dandruff or dirt with eggs.** Eggs are glued on the hair and you must pinch the egg and gently slide it down the hair to remove it.

## Can you prevent head lice?

Head Lice cannot be totally prevented but by routinely checking your child's head you can catch an infestation early, making treatment easier.

Teach your child to:

- Never share brushes, combs, hats, coats, or other personal items.
- Avoid piling their coats and hats on top of other children's.
- Take their own pillow to a sleepover party, and wash the pillowcase afterward.

Inspect your child's hair and scalp frequently. You can use a metal lice comb to screen for lice once a week. Move the hair in sections, and carefully look for eggs. A thorough lice check takes at least 10 minutes.