

Head Lice 101

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What is Head Lice?

- ▶ Head Lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects.
- ▶ Live in the hair on your head
- ▶ Feed off the blood from your scalp



Overview

- ▶ Common community problem
- ▶ In the U.S., an estimated 6 to 12 million infestations per year
- ▶ Most commonly among children ages 3-11
- ▶ Are not dangerous
- ▶ Do not transmit disease



Who Gets Head Lice?

- ▶ Anyone can get head lice
- ▶ Not a sign of poor hygiene
- ▶ Preschool or elementary school children most commonly effected, as well as their family members
 - ▶ Play close together
 - ▶ Share items that touch their heads



How is head lice spread?



- ▶ Most often through direct head-to-head contact

Common Myths

- ▶ Poor hygiene
- ▶ Prefer clean hair
- ▶ Going swimming will kill lice
- ▶ Spread by pets
- ▶ Can jump or fly
- ▶ The best way to get rid of lice is to shave the head



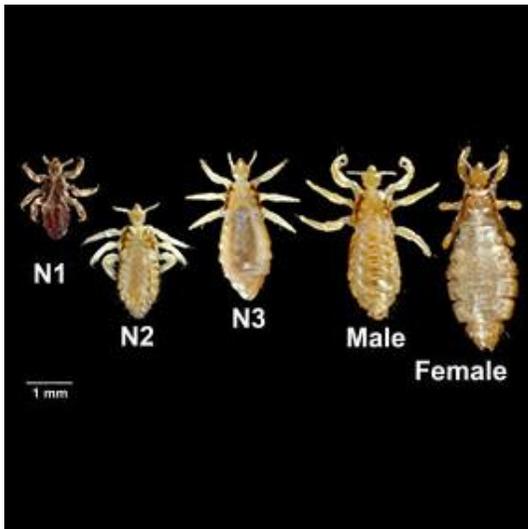
Is it Head Lice?

Most common symptoms

- ▶ Tickling feeling on scalp or in hair
- ▶ Itching (caused by bites of louse)
- ▶ Irritability and difficulty sleeping (lice are more active in the dark)
- ▶ Sores on head (caused by scratching)
- ▶ Finding a live louse is the best indication of an infestation



How to Identify Lice



- ▶ Nits (eggs)
 - ▶ Tear dropped shape
 - ▶ Yellowish or white
 - ▶ Cannot be brushed off, unlike dandruff
- ▶ Nymph (baby louse)
 - ▶ Grows to adult size in 1 to 2 weeks
 - ▶ Found on the scalp or in the hair
- ▶ Adult Louse
 - ▶ Size of a sesame seed
 - ▶ Tan to grayish-white
 - ▶ Commonly behind ears and near neckline

What Happens if the School Nurse Finds Lice?

- ▶ Parents of the child who has lice are notified
- ▶ Child is sent home for remainder of day
- ▶ May return to school next day if treated
- ▶ Classroom check conducted
- ▶ Portales Municipal Schools does not have a “no-nit” policy



How is Head Lice Treated?

Key Treatment Considerations

- ▶ Resistance to some over-the-counter (OTC) head lice treatments has been reported, but the prevalence is not known
- ▶ There are prescription treatment options available - contact your healthcare professional to determine what is appropriate for you



Head Lice Battle Plan

- ▶ 1. May or may not use Nix or Rid (your choice)
- ▶ 2. Apply olive oil treatment on days 1,5,9,13,17,21. If you do not use Nix or Rid first, add day 2 to the above list. (1,2,5,9,13,17,21)
- ▶ 3. Clean the environment.
- ▶ 4. Comb out the lice and nits.
- ▶ 5. Check for nits regularly

What You Will Need

- ▶ 1. A great big bottle of the least expensive OLIVE OIL.
- ▶ 2. A small plastic applicator bottle like the one used for applying hair color.
- ▶ 3. Covered elastic hair bands or hair clips to separate the hair.
- ▶ 4. Plastic shower caps.
- ▶ 5. Bandannas or bathing caps.
- ▶ 6. Towels.

How to Use Nix or Rid

- ▶ 1. Wash hair with a good clarifying shampoo like Prell to strip the hair of any other substances. Dry the hair thoroughly.
- ▶ 2. Cover eyes with a wash cloth. Apply Nix or Rid to dry hair, directly onto the scalp and massage it through the hair and scalp thoroughly.
- ▶ 3. Use a timer to ensure the Nix or Rid is left on the head for the appropriate amount of time found in the directions on the box and NO longer.
- ▶ 4. Wash it out and use a regular crème rinse or detangler.



The Olive Oil Treatment

- ▶ 1. Must be done on the days 1,5,9,13,17,21. Add day 2 if you do not use Nix or Rid.
- ▶ 2. Use the applicator bottle, part hair, and apply the olive oil directly onto the scalp. Massage thoroughly making sure to saturate the hair and scalp.
- ▶ 3. If child is old enough, cover head with plastic shower cap and keep in place with a bandanna or bathing cap to control the mess. Don't worry if the cap or bandanna comes off during the night. Leave the oil on for 8 hours. With young children, it may be easier to treat during the day.
- ▶ 4 Cover the pillow with a towel to protect the pillow.



Clean the Environment

- ▶ 1. Clean only slightly more than most people clean on a weekly basis.
- ▶ 2. Put your brushes away and use only combs until the infestation is over.
- ▶ 3. Vacuum or use a lint remover any place where the infested heads have rested. Don't forget your car seats, chairs, carpet, couches, etc.
- ▶ 4. Use clean towels each time you wash the hair.
- ▶ 5. Use the clothes dryer on high for 30 minutes on any items that will not be harmed in the dryer. **DO NOT strip your child's room of every toy. HEAT, VACUUM, or LINT REMOVER.**

The Comb Out

- ▶ Proper combing is a crucial step. There are two combing techniques and both should be done with the olive oil in the hair.
- ▶ Combing to remove bugs:
 - ▶ comb along the entire scalp, with the comb in constant contact with, but not scraping the scalp.
 - ▶ If all live lice are not combed out, they will continue to lay eggs
 - ▶ Clean the comb frequently with a tissue.
- ▶ Combing to remove nits:
 - ▶ Pin hair into sections
 - ▶ Using your fingers, take a very thin section of hair.
 - ▶ Starting right at the scalp, comb from the scalp all the way to the end of the hair.
 - ▶ Comb each section several times from different directions.
 - ▶ Clean the comb frequently with a tissue.

Wash Out the Oil

- ▶ 1. Use a clarifying shampoo for oily hair **DIRECTLY** on the oily head. **DO NOT** wet first. Massage through the hair, then rinse.
- ▶ 2. Lather again, rinse, lather again then do a final rinse.
- ▶ 3. Remember, lice are killed by dry heat. **SO**, dry the hair with a hair dryer and try to make it a pleasant experience. You will be doing this six more times over the next three weeks.



Check for and Remove Any Remaining Nits

- ▶ 1. The hair is clean and dry. Check for any nits that were missed in the combing process, and they must be removed by hand.
- ▶ 2. Divide the hair and separate one half from the other. Take a thick strand of hair in your fingers and check both sides of the strand for nits. Part the strands out of the way as you finish.
- ▶ 3. The newest nits are the smallest and closest to the scalp, so check very close.
- ▶ 4. Grasp the nit with your fingernail and pull the nit all the way off the hair.
- ▶ 5. Deposit the nits onto an oily tissue, flush the tissue when through.
- ▶ 6. When you have finished removing the nits, wash your hands carefully and use a nailbrush. Lice can easily hide under your nails.

Be Proactive!

- ▶ Check your children once a week for lice
- ▶ Encourage your child not to share hats, headphones, hair-ties, or headbands
- ▶ If lice is found, treat!
- ▶ Notify school nurse if lice is found

