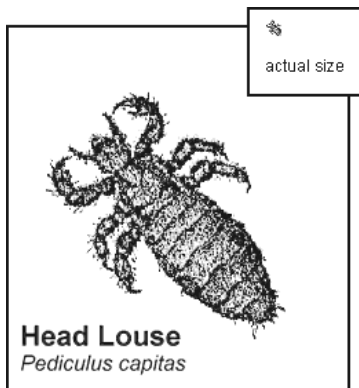


# HEAD LICE IDENTIFICATION, TREATMENT, AND CONTROL \*



## Identification

**Head lice** are found on scalp hairs, especially on the back of the neck and around the ears.

- Their nits (eggs) are glued to individual hairs. Lice are small, they are about 1/16 to 1/8 inch long. Nits are about 1/32 inch long.
- Nits are often the first sign of a head lice infestation. Other indications are; acute itching and very tiny red bite marks behind the ears and on the scalp.
- Head lice are transmitted by close personal contact with an infected person, or by sharing clothing and personal items such as hats, combs, and brushes. Lice cannot jump from person to person, and pets do not get head lice.

## Treatment

There are many steps you must take in treating head lice and it is important to do everything very thoroughly.

1. First thoroughly **shampoo the hair** with a shampoo that contains no conditioners or softeners. Hair must be very clean so the insecticide will penetrate. **Then** apply a lice killing shampoo. Some of these include Nix, RID, A-200, or R&C shampoo. It is important to follow the directions on the shampoo bottle that you purchase. It is also important to use a freshly cleaned towel when you have finished shampooing.
2. It is very important that you **remove all the nits** after shampooing. Nit removal is the most vital step. It is a painstaking, time-consuming, and often frustrating task. The nits do not come off easily: each must be snagged firmly by fingernails, tweezers, or a lice comb, slid down the hair shaft, and removed. Check the head for remaining nits daily for at least 10 days. You may want to **reapply the shampoo** in 7-10 days. Everyone living in the same house needs to be checked for lice. It is advisable to treat everyone.
3. The household also needs to be treated. **Wash all clothing**, bed linens, jackets, scarves, hats, etc. in hot water and dry in a hot clothes dryer for at least 20 minutes.
4. All family **combs and brushes must be treated**, including ones kept in purses and in the car. To treat the combs and brushes, remove all the hair and then heat in water over 150 degrees F for 10 minutes.
5. Carefully **vacuum mattresses**, sofas, chairs, pillows, carpets, car and other furniture that might have been exposed.
6. Ironing with a hot iron is an effective ways to **rid fabrics** of lice: especially material that isn't washable or easily dry cleaned. Seams on bed mattresses can also be ironed with a hot iron to get lice that may crawl into crevices.
7. Personal items, stuffed toys, and clothing that cannot be washed at high temperatures or dry cleaned should be placed in an air tight plastic bag for a minimum of 20 days at room temperature, or 48 hours in the freezer.

## Prevention

There are many steps to take to help prevent infestations of lice.

- Do not share combs, brushes, barrettes, hair ribbons, or other personal items.
- Do not share or borrow hats, batting helmets, scarves, pillows, or sleeping bags.
- Hang hats and coats separate from others, not on top of one another.
- Avoid putting heads together with other children, including "reading time" on pillows at school.
- Wash any clothing retrieved from lost and found before wearing.
- Check your child's head frequently.
- Provide each member of the family with personal towels and do not share.

\* Information taken from Washington County Health Department website