

Pediculus humanus capitis

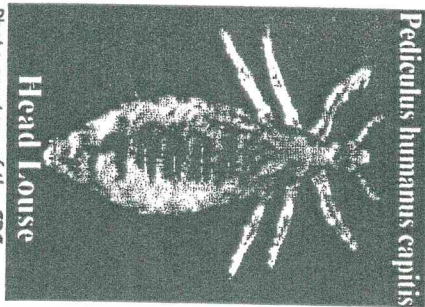
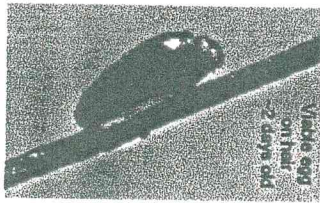


Photo courtesy of the CDC

What are head lice?

Head lice (*or Pediculosis*) are small, wingless parasitic insects approximately 1/8 of an inch long (about the size of a sesame seed) that live on the scalp. Head lice are very quick and use a hook-like claw to stay attached to the hair.

What are nits?
Female lice lay eggs called nits that are whitish, oval sacs approximately 1/16 of an inch long (about the size of a pin head). The nits are attached to the hair shaft by a cement-like substance that makes them difficult to remove. The life cycle of head lice is approximately 30 days during which time each female louse can lay up to 7-10 nits a day.



What are symptoms of head lice?

- **ITCHING AND SCRATCHING** usually on the back of the scalp and neck and behind the ears.
 - **SORES ON THE HEAD** caused by scratching.
 - **VISIBLE** lice or nits.
- Remember: NITS STICK ON THE HAIR.**
Some children may have no symptoms. Don't confuse dirt or dandruff with nits.

Who should I notify if my child has head lice?

- Pediatrician
- School Clinic
- Playmates and close friends outside of school

Should all family members be treated?

- **ALL** family members residing with an infested person should be examined for the presence of head lice.
- Treat ANY family member with a head lice infestation.

Exceptions:

Children under two years of age or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not use an anti-pediculosis product.

Persons with chronic illness or the elderly should consult their physician.

What is the treatment for head lice?

- **USE AN FDA APPROVED**, over-the-counter anti-pediculosis product. Prescription products are also available.
- **READ THE INSTRUCTIONS** before using any product and follow ALL instructions.
- **COMB HAIR** with a fine-tooth nit comb to remove lice and nits.
- **DISINFECT** all combs and brushes before using again by immersing them in hot water greater than 130 degrees or soaking in anti-pediculosis shampoo for 1 hour.
- **CHECK YOUR CHILD'S HAIR DAILY.** Manually remove nits for 2 weeks following the initial treatment.
- **RETREAT** your child 8-10 days after initial treatment.
- **CONTINUE** to check your child's head weekly for at least 4 weeks.



There is NO proof that the following treatments work:

- Vinegar
- Compounds that claim to dissolve the glue on the nits "to ease their removal"
- Mayonnaise
- Olive Oil
- Tea Tree Oil
- Lozions that claim to "suffocate" lice
- Petroleum jelly
- Other household chemicals, including: kerosene, gasoline, paint thinners and turpentine

If you have questions regarding treatment for head lice, please contact your pediatrician or your local health department.