

HEAD LICE

1.) Definition:

Lice are 1/16 inch little bugs that only live on human beings. Their favorite place is in the hair. They usually cause itching and sores in the scalp, especially at the back of the neck. They are gray and move quickly, but they can be seen. Smaller yet are their eggs (called nits), which are attached near the base of hairs and look like white lint or dandruff. Unlike dandruff, nits are firmly attached to the hair shaft and do not brush out easily. They hatch in a week. (**Note:** Public lice or crab lice should be treated the same).

2.) Treatment:

- a.) Medication for lice is over-the-counter. We recommend Nix. Use as directed. May need to repeat in one week.
- b.) The medicine kills all the lice and most of the nits. Remove nits by combing them out with a fine-toothed comb. Nits can be loosened using vinegar or olive oil. Do not use shampoo containing conditioner prior to using Nix as it may decrease the effectiveness of Nix.

3.) Cleaning the house:

Since lice are only passed from person to person, they can't live for over 72 hours (three days) outside the human body. However, the child's room should be vacuumed or wet-mopped. Sheets, blankets, and pillowcases should be carefully washed in hot water. Any combs or brushes should also be carefully washed. Hats, headbands, wigs, bed quilts, and blankets should be washed or set aside and not used for at least two weeks. Vacuum the car seats.

4.) Contagiousness:

Check the heads of everyone else living in the same house. If any of them have scalp rashes, sores or itching, they should be treated even if the lice are not seen. The child can return to school after one treatment. There are no lasting problems from having lice. Lice cannot jump or fly. Nits are white sacks on the hair follicles and do not indicate live lice or contagiousness, but they should be removed from the hair.