

LICE FACTS

Q: Where do head lice come from?

A: Head lice do not come out of the air or from the ground. They are human parasites and have probably been here since the beginning of time. Desiccated (dried up) head lice and their eggs (nits) have been found on the hair and scalps of Egyptian mummies.

Q: Do head lice jump?

A: Head lice do not have hind legs to hop or jump. They also do not have wings and cannot fly.

Q: How are head lice spread?

A: Head lice can be spread whenever there is direct contact of the head or hair with an infested individual. Lice can also be spread through the sharing of personal articles like hats, towels, brushes, helmets, hair ties, etc. There is also a possibility of spreading head lice via a pillow, headrest or similar items.

Head lice do not jump or fly and generally cannot survive longer than 24 hours off the host.

Q: Can you catch head lice in the pool, pond or lake?

A: Swimming with someone who has lice carries no greater risk of transmission than any other activity. When lice are in water, they go into a state of suspended animation but remain firmly locked onto the hair – literally hanging on for dear life. This is how they survive shampooing, rain, seawater and swimming pools. Risk of transmission will occur with the sharing of towels, piling clothing or towels, storing personal items in close proximity or direct head to head contact.

Q: How long can lice and nits survive off of a head?

A: Once laid, it takes 7-10 days for a nit to hatch. Nits off the head may not even hatch at all as they are laid close to scalp because they need human warmth to incubate. A nit hatching off of a head results in tiny nymph head louse which, without an accessible/nearby human, is doomed because it requires an immediate blood meal. Adult head lice off of their human hosts will generally not survive for more than 24 hours.

Q: Can you catch head lice from cars, pillows or furniture?

A: If a louse comes off the head and is left behind (i.e., on a pillow or head rest), it may be possible for the louse to infest another individual who places their head in that area. Vacuuming is recommended for any areas or items that may be in contact with those who are infested.

Q: Do head lice carry or transmit any disease?

A: While many have thought head lice to be only a nuisance, recent scientific study refutes this notion. DNA technology shows head lice to be the same species as the notorious body louse which has long been associated with diseases such as typhus and relapsing fever. The potential for disease transmission via the head louse should not be underestimated.

Q: What is the life cycle of the head louse?

A: Head lice can survive on a human host for approximately 30 days. They generally cannot survive longer than 24 hours off the host.

A female louse lays 3-5 eggs a day. (This means a female louse will lay a total of 90 - 150 eggs.) The eggs hatch in 7-10 days and it takes another 7-10 day for the louse to mature and lay their own eggs.

Q: Do pets get head lice?

A: Head lice cannot be "caught" from pets and cannot survive on pets. They are human parasites and require human blood for survival.

Q: Are African-American susceptible to lice infestations?

A: African Americans are reported to have a much lower incidence of head lice than Caucasians, Hispanics or Asian Americans. Pediatric Dermatology cites various studies that suggest the incidence among African American schoolchildren is less than half of one percent, while the incidence among their non-black schoolmates is usually more than 10 percent.

Even though African Americans may be less susceptible to infestations, this should not be grounds for complacency. African Americans can, and do, get head lice.

Q: How can I tell if the nits are dead or alive?

A: Children, like adults, do not want nits in their hair – dead or alive. The time it would take to make the distinction is time far better spent removing ALL the nits. Finding 10 dead nits guarantees nothing for the 11th.

Q: Are lice shampoos and other over the counter lice products potentially hazardous ?

A: Although the FDA requires testing for safety before they give their approval to any product, individuals have unique vulnerabilities that must be considered before any treatment.

We are against the use of any chemicals designed to kill or destroy head lice in any individuals, and specifically the one who have a pre-existing illness. This would include, but not be limited to, those with asthma, epilepsy, brain tumors, cancer or AIDS. Those on medication, or who have been previously treated for head lice, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers may be more vulnerable to side effects and should avoid chemical lice treatments for use on themselves or applying them to others.

Q: What about alternative and natural product?

A: Non-toxic remedies are obviously a preferred choice over pesticides whenever possible. However, this does not mean that everything touted as "natural" is across-the-board safe.

Many who try "alternatives" have already had failure with readily available pediculicides from the local drug stores. If there is success with such alternatives, we suspect that it may have to do with motivation and the "parent power" behind the effort - rather than any particular pediculicidal or ovicidal property.

No matter which remedy you are attempting - wrapping the hair in plastic or a shower cap and putting the children to bed is a bad idea. It is also a source of potential harm to use a wrap with any of the pesticide treatments (whether in bed or not) as it may alter its chemistry and absorption rates.

Effective screening and combing is the ultimate compliment to whatever course of action an individual selects, and this is what we do. We are the only alternative that will guarantee 100 % LICE AND NIT FREE.

Hair Butterflies, Lice and Nit Removal Salon
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