

# HEAD LICE FACT SHEET



Lenawee County  
**HEALTH**  
DEPARTMENT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## What is Head lice?

Head lice (head louse) is a parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people.

Head lice feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp. Head lice are NOT known to spread disease.

**Eggs:** Nits are head lice eggs. And are hard to see. They are about the size of a knot of a thread, oval in shape and are usually yellow or white.

**Nymphs:** Egg hatches release a nymph. The nit shell them become more visible (dull yellow) and remain attached to the hair.

**Adults:** Adult louse are about the size of a sesame seed, has 6 legs and are tan to grayish-white. Females are usually larger than males. They need to feed on blood several times a day and can live up to 30 days.

## What are the symptoms?

- Live and dead lice in hair
- Nits on hair shafts
- Itchy scalp
- A rash around the neck or ears

**Head lice and nits are mostly found on the scalp, behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the head.**

**Lice sprays are NOT recommend for ridding of lice from home. They are VERY toxic and unnecessary.**

## How can it be spread?

- Direct contact with an already infested person
- Wearing clothes, hats, using combs and brushes, lying on carpets or beds which have been used recently by an infested person

## How it is treated?

- **Lice may be treated on your own.** Head lice treatment shampoos and cream rinses can be bought at any pharmacy. Seek your health care provider for more advice
- **Be sure to read ALL directions carefully and follow them precisely**
- **You need to remove ALL nits on the head**

## How can it be prevented?

- Avoiding contact with infested objects and people.

## Ridding lice from home

- Wash **ALL** clothing and bedding used in the 2 days **prior** to treatment in hot water for **at least** 10 mins and dry on **high heat**
- Any hair objects used by an infested person should be soaked for 1 hour in hot water with lice shampoo
- Pillow, upholstered furniture, mattresses, carpets, rugs and cloth car seats need to be vacuumed thoroughly