

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