

# The FACTS of LICE: Head Lice Myths and Realities

Was your child sent home from school with head lice? You're not alone. An estimated 6 to 12 million infestations occur each year in the United States, most commonly among children ages 3 to 11 years old.

**Only dirty kids get lice. FALSE.**

Head lice can infest anyone, regardless of personal hygiene or age.

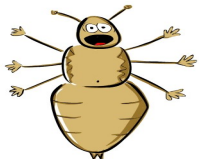


**Head lice are dangerous. FALSE.**

Head lice are a nuisance and may cause itching, but have not been shown to carry disease.

**Schools grow lice. FALSE**

Head lice only live on humans and feed on human blood. Lice can only live for around 24 hours off the human head without feeding.

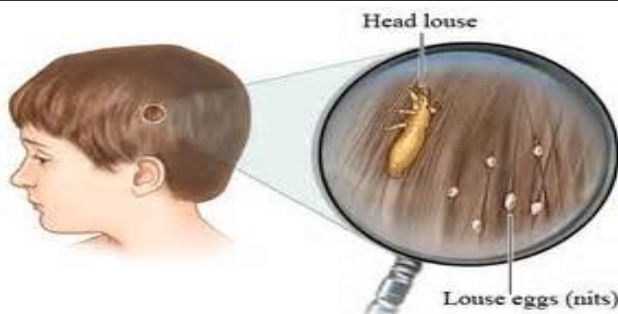


**Lice can jump and fly. FALSE**

Lice do not have back legs for jumping or wings for flying. Head lice are most commonly spread through direct head to head contact and sharing things like hats, helmets, scarves or pillows.

**Lice can be killed by regular shampooing and keeping your head underwater. FALSE**

Head lice cannot be washed away by regular shampooing or drowned. They can actually survive under water for up to 2 hours.



**Nits are contagious. FALSE**

You cannot "catch nits". Nits (eggs) can only be laid by a live female louse and are glued to hair shafts close to the scalp.



# Steps to Surviving Head Lice

## Step 1: Treat your child. Follow treatment instructions carefully.

- Use an over the counter lice treatment **following instructions EXACTLY**. Or you may:
- Talk to your child's pediatrician regarding treatment. There are a number of available treatments, including new prescription treatment options that are safe and may not require combing out nits from your child's hair. Whatever product you use, **follow instructions EXACTLY**.
- Save box or box top of product used** to treat your child to present to School Nurse when head check is done after treatment (for clearance to return to class).

## Step 2: Check your family.

- Check your family/household members for lice and nits.
- All family/household members with an infestation should be treated at the same time.

## Step 3: De-louse your house

- Identify items that could contain head lice (bedding, pillows, hats, helmets, stuffed animals, scarves, clothes)
- Machine wash all washable items in hot water and dry in hot dryer.
- Seal items that can't be washed in plastic bags for two weeks.
- Vacuum carpet, rugs and upholstery in your home and car.
- Combs and brushes should be washed and sanitized or thrown away.

## Step 4: Share the info.

- Notify parents of children who may have been in close contact with your child.
- Cancel all sleepovers and playdates until you're sure your child is lice free.

## Step 5: Don't...

- Don't use home remedies, hair color or harmful products on your child to kill lice. **Only use products designed specifically for treating lice and nits.**
- Don't send to school by bus after treatment. Transport your child to school for clearance by your school nurse before returning to class.

## Step 5: Do...

- Teach your child to avoid sharing hats, hair accessories or brushes/combs and touching heads together with other children.
- Braid child's long hair or wear in ponytail/bun to help prevent lice transmission.
- Check your child's head (hair & scalp) weekly for lice paying special attention to behind the ears and the nape of the neck (favorite sites for lice).
- Notify your School Nurse if live lice/nits are found or if you have questions.

Nurse \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Office# \_\_\_\_\_

