

# SAVE THIS IMPORTANT NOTICE

## *Dear Parent:*

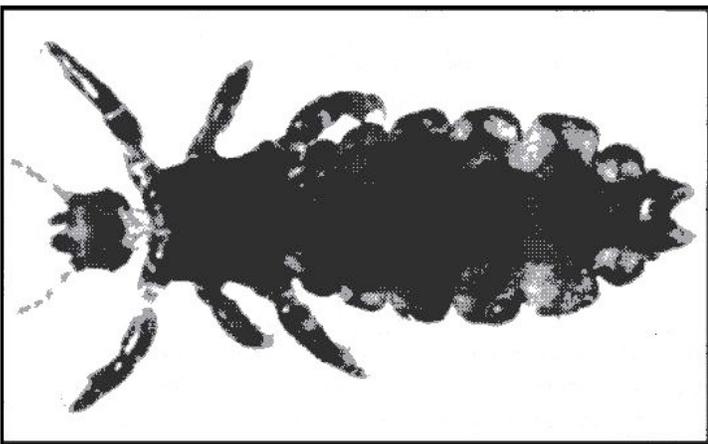
Head lice infestations continue to be a part of raising children today. Head lice are highly communicable and difficult to prevent, but if every parent takes the responsibility to CHECK-A-HEAD® and screen the entire family often, these human parasites can be detected early and managed with little difficulty. The following information should help you to identify and control head lice safely and thoroughly.

### How Do You Get Head Lice?

Head lice have been a parasite of humans since recorded time. Many people associate lice with unclean people or homes. This is not true for head lice. Frequent bathing or shampooing will not prevent head lice nor eliminate them once they are established. Head lice can affect anyone: rich or poor, young or old, male or female. They cannot jump or fly, and are mainly transmitted by head-to-head contact with infested persons. However, head lice can also / be transmitted by sharing hats, brushes and headrests. Human lice cannot thrive on household pets.

### What To Look For

Head lice are small insects about the size of a sesame seed. They are clear when they hatch and take on a reddish-brown color with their blood meals. They move quickly and shy away from the light, making them difficult to see. Diagnosis is often made on the basis of finding nits (lice eggs). Nits are tiny, yellowish-white oval eggs attached at an angle to the side of the hair shafts. (Note: The old quarter-inch from the scalp rule has given way to evidence that viable (live) nits may be found on the hair shaft at any distance from the scalp.) As the louse deposits her eggs (3-5 per day), she cements them to the hairs and, unlike lint or dandruff, they will not wash off or blow away. Hair casts or DEC plugs (desquamated epithelial cells) are often mistaken for nits. (Photo on reverse shows the difference.)



Adult female louse – highly magnified

Nits may be found throughout the hair, but are often seen at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and at the crown. A magnifying glass and/or natural light may help when looking for them. It is counter-productive to attempt to distinguish dead nits from live nits.

Personal hygiene standards warrant thorough removal of all the nits no matter what.

### Symptoms of Infestation

Itching can be a primary symptom of infestation, although everyone will not necessarily itch. Children seen scratching their heads should be examined at once. Red bite marks or scratch marks can sometimes be seen on the scalp and neck. In chronic infestations, children may develop swollen glands in the neck or under the arms.

### Treatment of the Individual

You may have already treated yourself and your family for head lice before this most recent infestation. And maybe you've tried a lice treatment product and found that it simply didn't work. Then there are individuals that should not be exposed to pesticides for any reason...children under the age of two, someone who is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, open wounds, asthma, allergies, epilepsy, cancer, other pre-existing medical conditions or taking medication. You should consult your pharmacist or physician if you discover lice/nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. No pesticide should be used in the eye area.

Safety must come first when treating for head lice. Remember that all lice-killing products are pesticides. If you choose to use an over-the-counter treatment, follow the directions carefully and use with caution. The NPA strongly discourages the prescription product containing the pesticide, Lindane. Before any family member is treated, all should be examined. Only those members showing evidence of infestation should be considered for treatment. Once the infestation is resolved, routine screening should continue for everyone.

If using a chemical treatment, make sure you cover the child's eyes with a towel or face cloth. Do not treat in the bathtub or shower, but have the child lean over the sink (this confines the lice product to the head area).

The NPA discourages the use of "concoctions" for which there is no scientific basis for claims of efficacy and human safety. A wide variety of such "lice remedies" are vigorously marketed to consumers via the Internet.

No matter what head lice product you may choose...or choose not to use...you will need a quality lice tool to remove both the lice and nits. The NPA recommends the LiceMeister® comb - the non-chemical approach.

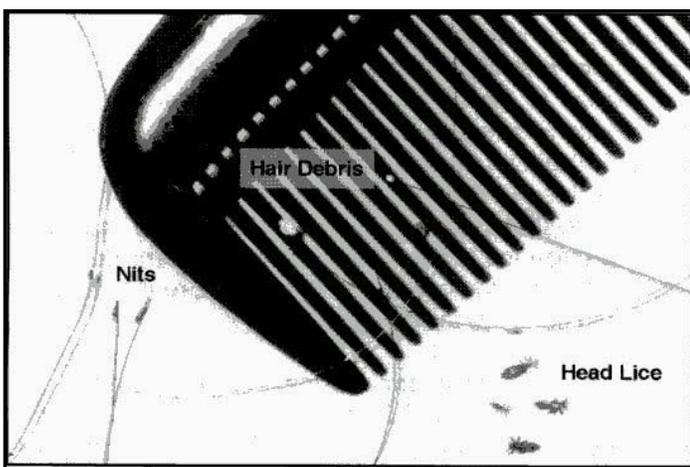
Remove all nits to comply with the NPA's No Nit Policy. Lice products do not kill all the nits, and survivors will hatch new lice generally within 7-10 days, and continue the infestation. Even dead nits will remain glued to the hair. Their presence causes unnecessary confusion about reinfestation. Nit removal can be accomplished with the NPA's LiceMeister combing tool or by picking them out with your fingernails. Nits can also be cut out with small safety scissors.

A daily screening for lice and nits is advisable for at least 10 days after treatment and regularly thereafter as part of routine hygiene. (Regardless of precautions taken at home, reinfestation from others can still take place.) Treatment itself can cause itching; do not reuse pesticides on the basis of itchiness alone.

Based on increasing reports of lice resistance on a national level, the NPA advises parents to discontinue the use of chemical products at the earliest sign of treatment failure. Manual removal is always the best option but especially when a chemical product has failed.

### Management of Personal Articles and Environment

Machine-wash all clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with the infested person during the last three days. Articles should be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. Non-washables can be vacuumed or dry-cleaned. However, spend your priority time on removing the lice and nits from those who are infested.



Enlarged photo of hair debris, nits and head lice  
*The nit is always oval-shaped and glued at an angle to the side of the hair shaft. Note the difference between hair debris and actual nits.*

This offers the most benefit. The NPA discourages bagging. Rugs, upholstered furniture, and car seats (and any personal items that cannot be washed such as stuffed animals), can be vacuumed.

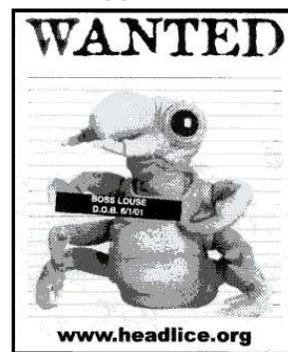
Repellents are not recommended. The use of "environmental" lice sprays is strongly discouraged by the NPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Lice sprays may be harmful to family members and pets. Vacuuming is the safe and effective alternative.

## The Non-Chemical Approach...

**Check this list before choosing a treatment for head lice and remember that both the person being treated and the person applying treatment are at risk.**

- Has the child already been treated for head lice with chemicals/pesticides for this... or a previous infestation?
- Has the child's home environment or bedding been treated with a lice spray?
- Is the child suffering from or receiving treatment for AIDS, cancer, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or any other illness?
- Is the child currently or recently on medication?
- Is the mother/caregiver pregnant or nursing or vulnerable in other ways?
- Is there chronic exposure to other pesticides in the home or school environment such as flea bombs or monthly exterminator services?

**If you answer Yes to even one of these questions, a non-chemical approach is the best choice.**



**Over-the-counter or prescription treatments are not to be used repeatedly, in conjunction with, or as a follow-up to other chemical formulations!**

National Pediculosis Association®, Inc.  
50 Kearney Road, Needham MA 02494  
TEL (781)449-NITS • FAX (781)449-8129  
[www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org)