

Got Head Lice?

Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management Program

Penn State Entomology

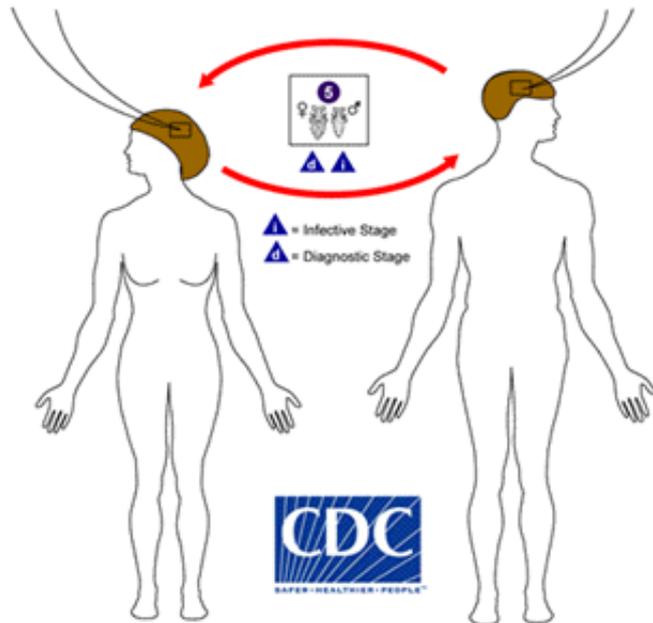
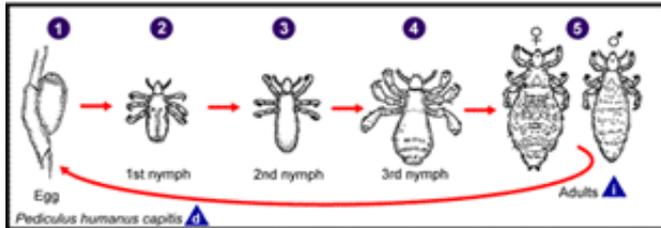


Head Lice



Photo: Centers for Disease Control Actual size: 1/16 - 1/8"

Head Lice Life Cycle



- Insects with six legs and no wings.
- They can *only* live in human hair
 - Head, eyebrows, and even eyelashes
- They suck to feed on blood
- Eggs (nits) are glued to the hair shaft, ¼” from scalp.
 - Eggs can last up to two weeks.
- Lice can live 30 days on a person.
 - Lice STAY on heads. If they fall off, they die quickly (24-36 hours)

(Jacobs 2013b)

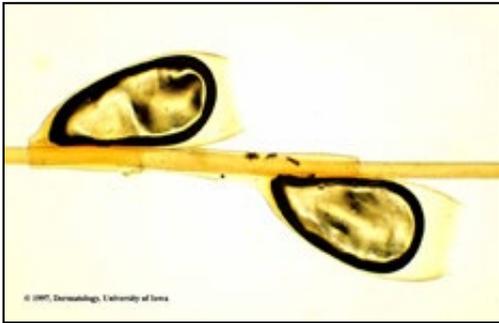
How do you get Head lice?

Any person can get them! Lice are easily transferred by:

- *Direct contact* among people
 - Head-to-head contact
- *Contact with belongings:*
 - Loose hair that has eggs attached
 - Lice that *recently* fell off
- DO NOT share brushes, hats, clothes, or bedding



What's the Harm?



Head lice do NOT transmit diseases.

BUT . . .

- Bites cause itching, sometimes severe.
- Bites may create sores on scalp.
- If people panic, they may try dangerous and ineffective treatments.



Image: Centers for Disease Control

Body lice are different from *head* lice.
Body lice can spread typhus

- 57 cases in LA (10/2018); 6 homeless

Policy for Schools & Childcare Providers

DO NOT:

- immediately exclude the child (stay until end of day)
- have a “no nit” policy
- attempt to treat the child yourself
- ask or allow the room(s) to be sprayed with pesticides!
- buy and use sprays and foggers - these are
 - *Dangerous to children*
 - *Not effective*
 - *An illegal use*



Remember: Only licensed pest control professionals can use pesticides in schools or childcare settings.

If a Child has Head Lice...

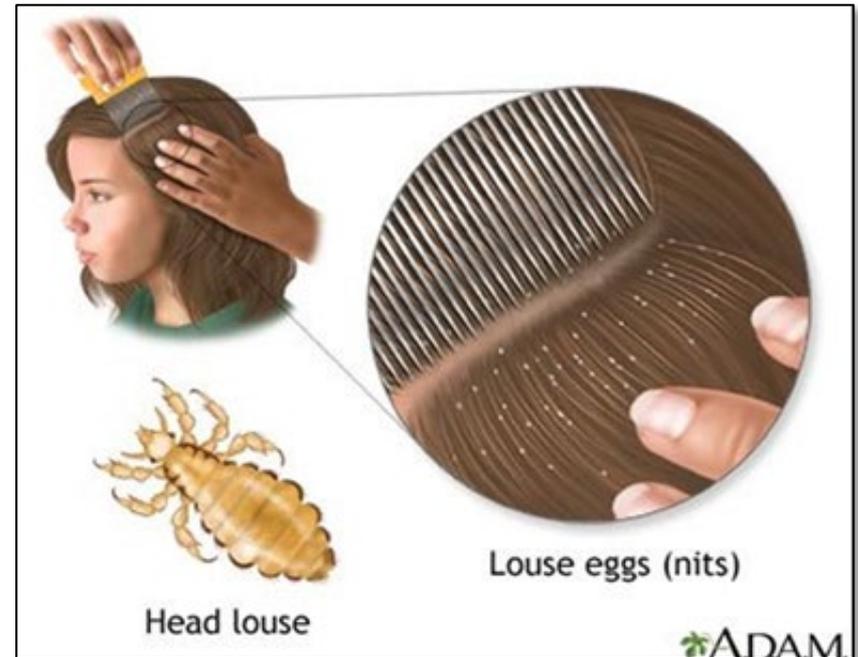


DO:

- Isolate the child's belongings (coat, hat, backpack) and seal in a plastic bag.
 - Items can be put in a clothes dryer to kill the head lice - 30 min. on high heat
- Call the parent or guardian and explain.
- Alert the parents of the other children that head lice have been found, but do not identify the child that has head lice.

Treating Head Lice on People

- Comb hair with a fine-toothed metal comb
 - removes live lice and nits.
- Conditioners can help
 - Cetaphil (Nuvo)
 - Oils, etc.



Killing Head Lice on Belongings



Photo: Dion Lerman, PA IPM

Head lice and their eggs are killed by dry heat.

- Use a hot dryer to decontaminate bedding, clothing, stuffed animals and other soft items.
 - Place dry items into a dryer, set on hot for 30 minutes.
 - Do not overload the dryer.
- Washing items first is not necessary, but is OK.

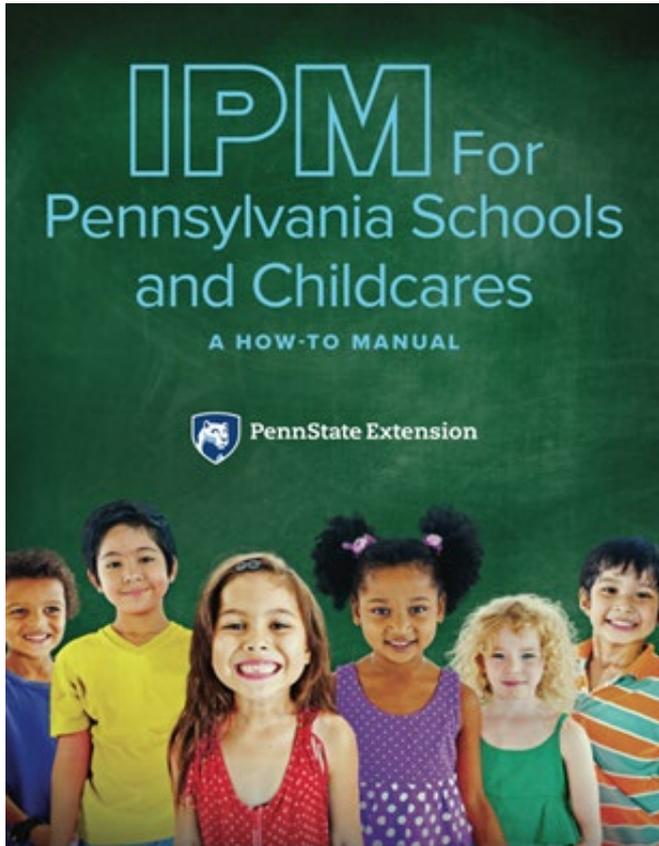
Shampoos for Head Lice

“Shampoos” to kill head lice can be bought or prescribed by a physician or nurse practitioner.

- These products have pesticides in them:
 - Rx: lindane or malathion (organophosphates); OTC: pyrethroids.
 - Pesticides can be absorbed through the skin and may pose a danger to children.
 - Head lice are often resistant to ingredients in these shampoos.
- Parents should speak with their child’s health care provider to decide a course for treatment.
- For instructions about the use of lice shampoos and other treatments see:
<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>



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Sources as noted on slides and in References

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