

Head Lice Lurking?

Hearing the words “head lice” may cause you to grimace. In most people’s minds, head lice reflect a lack of hygiene and dirtiness. But, the truth is ... head lice do not come from dirt or a lack of cleanliness. They come from other head lice and are transferred by head-to-head contact and sharing of combs and brushes, clothes and hats. They actually prefer clean and healthy heads! If your children get head lice, at least now you know they have good hygiene, but we don’t expect this to make you happy. Here are some tips for noticing and treating head lice.

- ☑ If your child has been exposed to head lice or is seen continuously scratching his or her head, check for nits (lice eggs) every day for three to four weeks. They tend to be found behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. Nits are usually white or light grey in color and do not come off easily. Hint: if it crumbles in your hand, it is not a nit.
- ☑ If you find your child does have head lice ... don’t panic. Consider using an over-the-counter medication like a pediculicide, a shampoo or creme rinse used to kill head lice. This may work; however, pediculicides are no longer considered 100 percent effective because of insect resistance. If this does not work for your child, consult your physician about prescription products or talk to your pharmacist.
- ☑ Never use products containing Lindane, a powerful neurotoxin banned for use in the United Kingdom and given a thumbs down by *Consumer Reports*.
- ☑ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends against using any lice sprays because of the danger to small pets and children.
- ☑ Use a “nit-picking” comb—a special fine-tooth comb used to remove lice and nits.
- ☑ Wash your child’s combs, brushes and hair accessories in very hot water and wash their bedding and towels in water that’s at least 130 degrees F.
- ☑ You don’t have to ban every toy and vacuum every nook and cranny in the house. Lice cannot survive without the human host for more than a day.



Brought to you by your local pharmacist and prepared by the Michigan Pharmacists Association

