

# Head Lice

## ***Definitions:***

- Parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people.
- Do not spread diseases but may cause sores and secondary infections from scratching
- Nits are lice eggs that are whitish looking specks that are very small and teardrop shaped. They are attached to the hair shaft next to the scalp.

## ***Signs and Symptoms:***

- Tickling feeling of something moving in your hair
- Itching of the head and neck
- Irritability and difficulty sleeping; head lice are most active at night
- Look for: Crawling lice in the hair-usually aren't very many. They are very small about the size of sesame seed.  
Eggs (nits) are glued to the hair shaft, often found behind the ears and at the base of the neck and the around the front hairline.  
Scratch marks on the head or the back of the neck at the hairline  
Occasionally you might find bite wounds from the adult louse



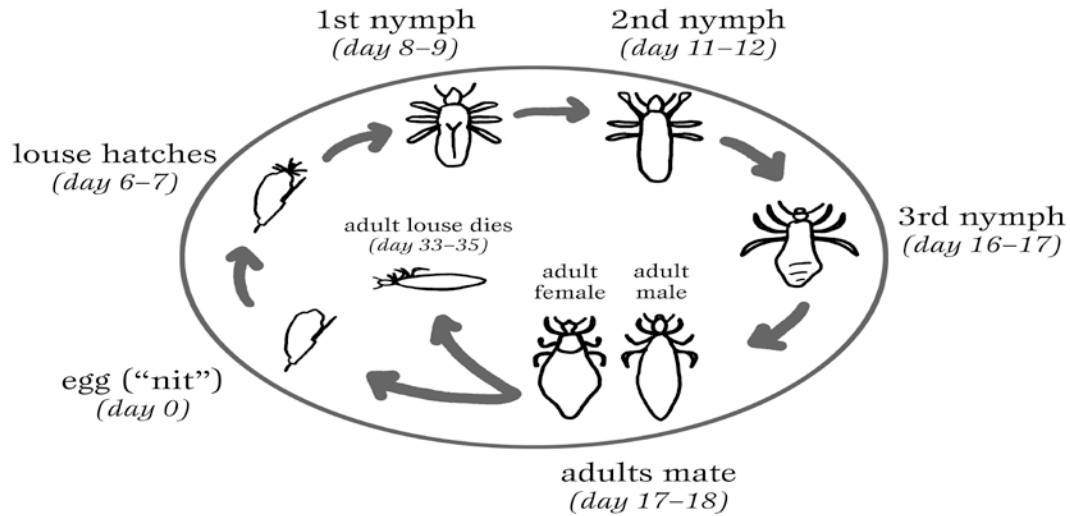
## ***If you suspect that you child has lice:***

- Call the school immediately so they can take necessary preventative measures.
- Treat you child for head lice and remove nits daily (if all nits within ½" of the scalp are not removed, some may hatch and you child will be reinfested).

## ***Exclusion/Re-entry***

- The student will be checked for live lice prior to re-entry to school. If lice are still present then they will be sent back home and a referral will be made to the Family Resource Center.

# Life Cycle of the Head Louse



*Note: Female lays eggs at 18-19 days. She can lay 4-8 eggs each day for the next 16 days.*

## Head Lice Prevention Tips for Kids:

- Although head lice are mostly spread through head-to-head contact, re-infestation may be likely if a head covering or hair accessories are shared.
- **NEVER** share combs, brushes or hair accessories
- Avoid sharing sporting helmets. If you do, thoroughly clean the helmet often.
- It is recommended that you regularly clean all shared head coverings such as hats, pillows, backs of chairs, car seats and bicycle helmets.
- Sleepovers are a common place for head lice to spread. Check your child's head after a sleepover and wash all bedding brought home from the sleepover.
- If your child or their friend has had head lice reschedule the sleepover until they have been lice free for 6 weeks.
- It is suggested that the use tea tree oil shampoo or rosemary and mint may help repel lice.
- FairyTales is also an all-natural hair treatment line that has preventative shampoos, conditioners, and hair spray along with treatment shampoos.

## Preventing Head Lice at Home:

- It is important to clean the living environment as soon as you begin treatment. To prevent re-infestation:
- All clothing, towels, bedding, mattress pad, pillows and stuffed animals that can be washed should be thoroughly laundered once all those with head lice begin their treatment.
- Laundry should be washed in hot water (125° F) and dried in a hot dryer or dry cleaned if not washable. Vacuum sofas and chairs.
- Combs, brushes and hair accessories should be soaked for at least 15 minutes in hot
- Unwashable items can be enclosed in plastic bags, and securely tied for two weeks.
- If you have freezing temperatures, 32°F or lower in your area, place plastic bags outside for several days, or in your freezer the freezing temperature kills the lice.
- Thoroughly vacuum all mattresses, carpeting, furniture and baby safety car seats
- Vacuum the car, paying special attention to head rests and using the crevice tool to get into the cracks of the seats.
- Make sure to remove the vacuum bag and throw it away in an outside garbage can.

## Head Lice Prevention in Schools:

- Teach children to never share combs, brushes, hats, scarves or hair accessories.
- Instruct them to put all mittens, scarves and hats inside coat sleeves, then place coats in backpacks.
- Try not to let coats in lockers touch, or place coats and accessories in backpacks or plastic bags.
- Helmets, headsets, and other shared headgear should be cleaned as often as necessary to help prevent spreading head lice in schools.

- Schoolwide head checks are no longer recommended. It is your responsibility as a parent/guardian to check your child's head at least once a month. If one person in the home has head lice others should be checked and treated as well.

## ***Treatment:***

- Over the counter (Rid, Nix) following strict directions on the bottle and treat every person that has live lice and nits.
- Over the years lice have become resistant to many of the over the counter preparations therefore are not always effective in treating lice.
- Contact your healthcare provider which can write a prescription medication for treatment.
- Follow directions carefully especially the amount of product to use, length of time on the hair, and whether to use on dry or damp hair. Directions will vary depending on the product.
- With certain products a second treatment is recommended 7-10 days later to kill any lice that may have hatched after the first treatment.
- It may take 24 hrs for products to kill lice it is very important to comb out all of the nits.
- Treatment can be extremely costly if directions are not followed for proper treatment and reinfestation occurs.

## ***Alternative Treatments:***

The following remedies are reported to be effective treatments for head lice. The remedies mentioned act upon head lice through suffocation by smothering the lice. Fleming County School System does not necessarily endorse these. Additionally, no product is 100% effective. Therefore, the manual method of nit removal using a lice comb is necessary.

### **The Mayonnaise Method**

- Place mayonnaise on the hair
- Wrap the hair with plastic wrap or a shower cap for 5 hours or overnight
- Wash mayonnaise out of the hair or use shampoo as usual
- Remove the nits with a lice comb and or fingers

### **Mineral Oil Remedy**

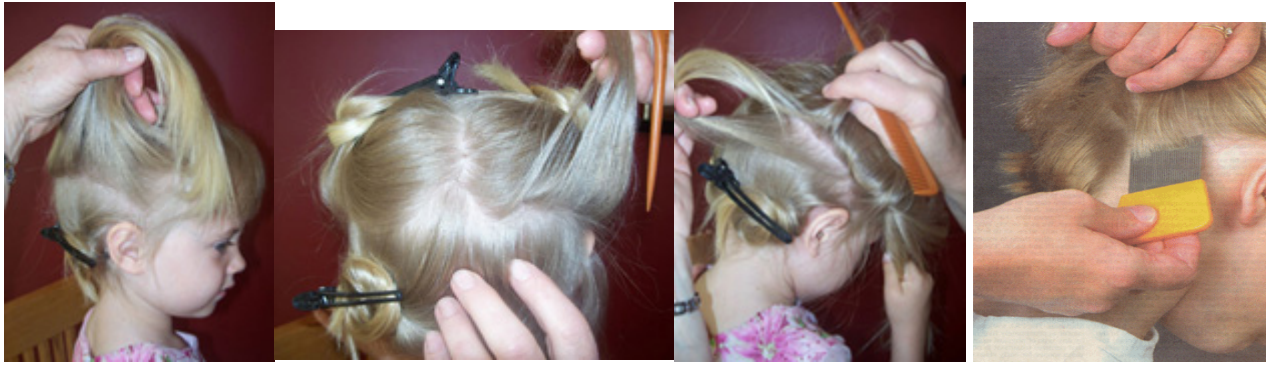
Slightly warm the mineral oil and pour over the entire scalp. After 10 minutes shampoo the hair and using a lice comb remove the nits and suffocated lice. Repeat procedure every 2 days for 10 days. All lice and nits must be removed!

### **Olive Oil Remedy**

- Apply olive oil to hair thereby smothering lice. Using a lice comb, comb through hair section by section to remove all of the nits and lice.
- After combing each section of hair, clean comb with a tissue or dip and clean comb in alcohol making sure that the comb is clean of any nits or lice before combing next section.
- You will need to continue to check your child's hair for the next few days to look for and remove any lingering nits.

## ***How to Remove Nits:***

- Vinegar can be used to dissolve the glue that the louse "glues" to the hair shaft. This allows the nits to be removed more easily.
- Starting at the base of the neck, comb hair in sections with a lice comb until all nits are removed. Because Lice Ice helps to release the natural glue substance that the nits are attached with, there should be little to no combing.
- Separate hair into 4 sections, pinning the sections in a flat curl against the head with bobby pins or clips. You will be working with smaller sections no bigger than 1 inch x 1/2 inch. Only work on one section at a time, making sure to keep cleaned sections pinned back.
- Hold the hair with one hand. Insert the lice comb as close to the scalp as possible and pull through the hair in one motion. Check the comb. If you see nits or lice, use a tissue to wipe the comb before you use it again. Throw the tissue into a waste can. You also can dip the comb in rubbing alcohol and remove any nits or lice before combing another section.
- Comb one section at a time and check each section again, until you have cleaned that section of hair. Pin the hair in a curl flat against the head.
- Remove the bobby pins from the next large section of hair and repeat the process until you have finished all 4 large sections.



Make sure that with each stroke of the comb that the nits and lice are removed from the comb. You can dip the comb in vinegar, or rubbing alcohol before the next stroke. It is best to comb the hair in direct sunlight or bright light. The nits will reflect in the sunlight making them easier to see. (They will glisten almost like shards of glass.) Occasionally the nits will be too small to come out with the comb and you must use your fingernails or tweezers to remove the nits.



**Continue to check the head and combing hair daily for 2 weeks.**

### **Clean-Up After Combing For Head Lice**

- Plastic Lice Combs:  
Soak for 15 minutes in hot vinegar water (1 teaspoon vinegar to 2 cups hot water)
- Metal Lice Combs:  
Boil the metal comb for 15 minutes.
- Use an old toothbrush to clean the comb.
- The comb can now be used on another family member.

### ***Suggested Check list for Lice Treatment***

- Shampoo child's hair with lice treatment following the directions on the bottle
- Use of non- chemical treatments
- Shampoo hair with shampoo and rinse well. DO NOT use conditioner.
- Remove nits with fingernails or use a fine tip lice comb.
- Treat all family members if needed.
- Boil the combs, brushes, and hair accessories.
- Wash all of the child's worn clothes, including coats, bedding, dry in a HOT dryer.
- Wash all family members' clothes as needed and any other items your child has come in contact with, such as bedding, stuffed animals, carpet, and furniture.
- Dry all clothing in HOT dryer. If unable to dry all objects, then place in a plastic garbage bag and put away for two weeks outside the house
- Sweep all floors with the vacuum, vacuum mattress and all the furniture, carpet, and seats in the cars and trucks.
- Place vacuum bags in the outside garbage can as soon as you are finished
- Check the heads of all family members every day for 2 weeks
- Upon re-entry to school, student will be checked by school personnel, if lice are found then your child will be required to return home.

Fleming County Schools  
School Re-Entry Form for Head Lice

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have examined \_\_\_\_\_ and find that he/she is:

- Free of live lice
- Free of nits
  
- Continues to have nits
- Continues to have live lice

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Signature of Nurse/School Personnel

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Signature of Parent/Guardian

