



Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

PREVENT • PROMOTE • PROTECT

What to Know About Lice

Is your child being attacked by those pesky head bugs known as lice? Lice are tiny bugs that live on your hair shaft and scalp (head). They eat small amounts of blood many times per day.

Facts you should know:

1. While pesky, lice do not carry disease.
2. Lice spreads easily from person to person by close bodily touch; like sleeping in a bed, lying on a pillow, carpet or blanket that someone who has lice just used.
3. Lice are most common for children ages 3-12 years and girls are more likely to get them than boys.
4. Lice are more common in the Spring and Fall.
5. Lice can only live 1-2 days after falling off of a person.
6. You can't get lice from a household or outdoor pet.
7. Having head lice is not a sign of being dirty. Anyone, at any time, may have these pesky little critters.

Signs of Lice:

1. Tiny yellow, tan or brown dots on the hair shaft close to the scalp (head). Known as nits, these are the eggs. Nits often look like dandruff but can't be moved or blown off.
2. Adult lice are move quickly so you may not see them crawling on the scalp (head) unless it is a bad case. Adult lice do not have wings. They can't fly or jump from person to person, they crawl.
3. Itching may not start right away. But a child may complain of feeling something crawling or tickling their head. The itching is caused by the spit that comes from the lice bites.
4. Sores come from scratching the head. Call your doctor if your child's head looks oozy.
5. Small red rash or bumps are caused by the lice biting the head.

We have these in our house now what do we do?

1. Shampoo the head with a medicated shampoo, which you may buy at your local drug store. Most children can go back to school or day care after just 1 shampooing, but call your school or child care provider and follow their rule.
2. Wash all clothing, bed linens, towels, hats and jackets that were used by the person 2 days before lice were found. Wash in washing machine in hot water. Water temp should be at least 130 degrees F.
3. Dry all washed items in a very hot dryer for at least 20 minutes.
4. If you cannot wash clothing or items such as stuffed animals place them in a sealed plastic bag for at least two weeks.
5. Soak all combs, brushes, hair ties, bands and barrettes in hot water for 10 min. Or, just throw them away.
6. Vacuum all floors, upholstered furniture, and car seats (which is one of their favorite hiding places). Your child may become infected again and again if this step is not done.

How do we keep these little pests from coming back?

1. 7 days after the first shampooing, repeat using the medication shampoo. This will help kill any newly hatched eggs.
2. Let kids know they should never share hats, combs, brushes, barrettes, hair ties, pillows, helmets, or towels with others. It does not matter whether they have lice or not, you just never know.
3. Every 3-4 days check each person in the household for signs of lice.
4. Follow all the directions as given that come with the lice treatment products.
5. If your family is not lice free after 2 weeks call your doctor. You may need a stronger medication to get rid of them.

Please contact Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department at 308-345-4223 if you have any other questions or concerns.

Other resources:

www.kidshealth.org

www.cdc.gov