

Head Lice Facts

- Head lice are common among all classes of people.
- You can completely control a head lice infestation with manual removal alone. You cannot completely control head lice with head lice shampoos alone. You must combine shampoo treatment with manual removal.

(University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C851>)

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Most cases of head lice are acquired outside of the school.
- Head lice cause no medical harm.
- Head lice are transmitted by head-to-head contact.

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Head Lice

Facts and
prevention



Head Lice Prevention and Control



Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. However, much less frequently they are spread by

sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice have crawled or nits attached to shed hairs may have fallen. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1–2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

The following are steps that can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:



Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).

Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.



Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.

Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry

cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.



Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid reinfestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.

Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.



Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.