



Millions of American children get head lice every year. The more parents know about lice, the better prepared they are to deal with a lice infestation.

Lice are tiny insects, about as big as sesame seeds that live on the human scalp. They cannot fly or jump; they can only crawl. Lice hatch from eggs called nits. Nits are tiny, yellowish-brown to white, tear-drop shaped and attached to the hair shaft close to the scalp. Lice can be spread as long as they remain alive on the infested person or their clothing. Unattached to the body and without a blood meal, head lice survive for approximately 6-24 hours.

Nits are easier to see than lice and are usually located at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Nits are attached to the hair and are usually about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the scalp. Parents should routinely check their children's hair for nits.

Preventing a lice infestation is easier than treating one. Direct physical head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission. Parents please talk with your children and remind them not to share combs, brushes, headbands, hats, shirts, headphones, or pillows. Head-to-head contact should be avoided as much as possible. Also remember when in stores to avoid trying on hats or other things that could transmit lice. Head lice is not a serious medical condition. No child should be singled out or embarrassed when checking for or treating head lice. It can happen to anyone at any age.

Please notify your school nurse if your student has lice and to help with proper treatment if infested.

For more information you can check out:

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/common/head\\_lice.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/common/head_lice.html)