



# Take a Peek Once a Week!

## Get the Facts about Head Lice:

1. **FACT:** Head lice, known as pediculosis, are wingless parasites that feed on the human scalp.
2. **MYTH:** Head lice are the result of poor hygiene.  
**FACT:** It's actually easier for them to live in clean hair.
3. **MYTH:** Head lice hop, jump or fly.  
**FACT:** Head lice move around by crawling.
4. **FACT:** Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person.
5. **MYTH:** Head lice can live on dogs, cats or other family pets.
6. **FACT:** Head lice are found in countries all over the world.
7. **FACT:** Head lice have been around since the beginning of time. Scientists have even removed head lice from prehistoric mummies; Cleopatra was buried with her gold nit comb, used to pick pesky critters from her hair.
8. **MYTH:** Head lice are a health hazard.  
**FACT:** Head lice are not a medical or public health hazard and are not known to spread disease, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Basically, head lice are a nuisance.
9. **FACT:** Head lice are most commonly found in 2-11 year-olds.

10. **FACT:** Although head lice can be found at any time, generally, there is a rise in cases following summer vacations and school breaks.
11. **MYTH:** Everyone itches from head lice.  
**FACT:** Itching is caused by an allergic reaction to the bites of head lice and not everyone is allergic to them. Generally, it takes a month or more for an infested person to develop itching.
12. **MYTH:** Head lice wash off in the shower or with regular shampoo.  
**FACT:** Regular shampoo does not have any effect on head lice. In fact, head lice do not drown in swimming pools and blow dryers and flatirons do not kill head lice.
13. **FACT:** Head lice rarely leave a healthy head. Two Australian studies proved this: In 1 study, 118 carpeted classroom floors were examined and found to be free of lice despite more than 14,000 live lice found on the heads of 466 children using these classrooms. In a second study, live lice were found on only 4% of pillowcases used by infested volunteers.” It is a matter of survival; head lice do not readily leave a scalp. (as reported by Frankowski et al [*Pediatrics* 2010;126; 392-403])
14. **FACT:** Per the American Academy of Pediatrics, “no healthy child should be excluded from or allowed to miss school time because of head lice.”

## BE PROACTIVE: PREVENT THE SPREAD

**Please check your child’s head once a week.** We recommend checking on Friday. By checking on Friday, you have the weekend to discuss your concern with your child’s healthcare provider and treat as recommended. Your child does not miss school and you do not miss work. By examining the hair once a week you can note subtle changes in your child’s scalp. This allows for earlier treatment, helping to prevent the spread to other family members and friends. Inspect using a bright light. Pay careful attention to the hair shafts within a ½ inch of the scalp. Since head lice do not encapsulate the hair, you need to examine both sides of the hair shaft. A tail comb is helpful in making thin parts in the hair. Since head lice need less than a ½ inch of hair to survive, any child with hair should be checked. So make Fridays family night: order pizza, put in a DVD and check your child’s scalp!

Since head lice are spread from head to head contact, wearing long hair in ponytails, braids or messy buns can limit contact. Children should be discouraged from hugging and putting their heads together. Indirect spread through contact with personal belongings (combs, brushes, hats) is much less likely but may occur.

If your child is treated for head lice, please inform the school nurses. Your child may return to school after proper treatment. The child should be brought to school by a parent. The school nurse will check your child's head for any sign of head lice. If cleared, your child may return to class. Due to privacy issues, the school nurse is not able to discuss specific cases of pediculosis. It is parent/guardian responsibility to notify anyone the infested child has had contact with during the past month. Remember, your child is still playing with the same children/ teammates. Once you have treated your child, you do not want your child to be re-infested. The school nurses will check classmates, bus mates and siblings. Other children and family members your child has been in contact with will also need to be checked. It is your responsibility to inform these contacts.

## But I don't know what I am looking for...

As always, your school nurses are willing to assist you in identifying head lice. However, there is a wealth of information on head lice prevention, identification, and treatment from reliable sources on the internet. Images, videos and written material are only a click away. The following sites provide accurate information on head lice. **Please note:** we are not endorsing any products that may be mentioned. Please consult you healthcare provider for his/ her preferred method of treatment.

### Resources:

[http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen\\_info/faqs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen_info/faqs.html)

<http://www.headlice.org/faq/lousology.htm>

Nit: <http://www.headliceinfo.com/freemovies/hair.jpg>

<http://www.skindsight.com/adult/pediculosisCapitisHeadLice-references.htm>

<https://identify.us.com/>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/headlice.html>

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/126/2/392>

**Informational videos include:**

Is It Head Lice: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrScqdNuTpc>

Head Lice to Dead Lice (Part One):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCoZP5Aso5U>

Size Comparison and Removing Lice from Hair:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSbD42HXiTQ&feature=related>

Please contact the Health Office at 908-850-3161 ext. 2 if you have any questions or concerns. By making head checks part of your child's grooming routine we can help limit the spread of head lice. So remember to .....



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