

Head Lice

What is it?

Lice is a parasite that infests the head and neck. The females lay up to 6 eggs per day. The lice moves by crawling, they do not hop, jump or fly.

What does it look like?

Adult lice are approximately 2-3mm long.

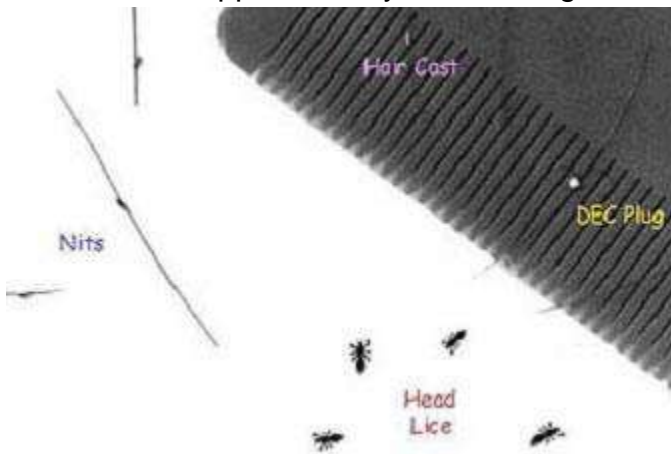


Image © 1997-2009 The National Pediculosis Association® Inc.

How is it spread?

Lice is spread by close person to person contact. It is important to remember that lice does not transmit any disease and they are more of a nuisance than anything else. A lice infestation is not related to the cleanliness of the person or environment.

Signs and Symptoms

The most common sign of a lice infestation are itching, which may take 4-6 weeks to appear. Another common sign of a lice infestation is a tickling feeling or the sensation of something moving in the hair. People who have a lice infestation may not exhibit any symptoms. Other symptoms include irritability, difficulty sleeping, and sores that are caused by scratching (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

I've got it, now what? Treatment

Lice can be treated by a variety of home remedies, over the counter medications or prescriptions. The most effective ways to treat lice include combing through the hair (using a nit comb) and removing each nit from the hair. It is recommended that clothing, bedding and toys be machine washed and dried (with hot water and hot air)(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Any items that cannot be cleaned right away should be stored in a plastic bag for no more than 3 days. Vacuuming furniture and floors also assists in removing infested hair (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

Risks

Lice can only spread between people through close proximity with a person infested with lice or by sharing their brushes or hats.

Prevention and Control

Head lice can be avoided by avoiding head-to-head contact during play or other activities, and performing regular head checks. Do not share clothing, combs, brushes, or towels with other people. Avoid laying down on items that have recently come into contact with people who have a lice infestation. Clothing and linens that have come into contact with people who have a lice infestation should be machine washed and dried with heat. Vacuuming efficiently and frequently can help get rid of hair with eggs attached to them (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

What does Camp Kawartha do?

Councillors at Camp Kawartha are trained in how to check for lice. Lice checks are completed during pre-camp arrival and registration. If lice is found at this time, the individual who brought the camper will treat the camper with oil and vinegar followed by a fine-toothed nit combs while at the camp (this can take 2-3 hours depending on the length of the hair). The camper will be checked again every 2-3 days, otherwise all other campers are checked weekly for lice and if found while the child is at camp, it is treated by the councillor.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013, September 24). [*Parasites - Lice - Head Lice*](#).

Lice Squad Canada. (2014). [*Identifying Head Lice*](#).