

HEALTH BULLETIN

Lice (Insect)

Symptoms:

Small white/gray-colored eggs/nits (resemble grains of sand) firmly attached to hair shaft about 3-4mm from the scalp—most often at the back of the scalp, behind the ears, and at the top of the head; itchiness on the scalp and neck.

How It Is Spread:

Lice are spread **ONLY** by crawling from person to person. This can occur by having direct contact with the hair, head gear (i.e. combs, brushes, hats), or sleeping items (i.e. blankets, sheets) of infected persons.

Incubation

The eggs (nits) hatch between 6-10 days from date of contact and new lice are able to reproduce within 2-3 weeks.

Communicable Period:

Until treated with a chemical that kills lice and all nits are removed from the scalp.

Control:

If infected, exclude your child from the center and provide information to the center regarding the nature of the condition. Check family members and other close contacts for possible infection.

Suggested Treatment:

See a physician for recommended treatment. Treat with special shampoo/rinse available at local retailers, following the package directions carefully. Removing all nits after shampooing hair with medicine and a special fine-toothed nit removal comb ensures that re-infestation is easier to detect. Repeat treatment as recommended on package or within 10 days to kill any newly hatched lice.

Prevention:

Check young children routinely. Do not borrow or share combs, hair accessories, or other head gear. Wash clothes and other infested items in hot water (>130°) or dry clean. Thoroughly vacuum rugs, upholstered furniture, and mattresses.

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics,
Managing Infectious Diseases in
Child Care and Schools© 2010
www.aap.org

Center for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov

