You and your family may have had to deal with lice—those tiny microscopic insects that love human hair. Most people become infested with head lice than ever before. Experts believe this is because kids have more contact with one another than adults do. They are more likely to come in contact with each other while playing, for example. Girls are more likely to get lice than boys. Girls usually have longer hair, which means it may touch other hair more often.

**What lice are**

A louse is a type of insect with no wings. When there is only one, it is called a louse. More than one are called lice.

Different kinds of lice live on different kinds of hair; they don’t usually move from one type to another. For example, human head lice would not be happy living on your pet. They don’t live on other body hair, either. They like fine hair that grows fairly close to other hairs.

**What lice do**

A louse is a type of parasite. A parasite is a plant or animal that lives in or on another living creature. This being is called a host. The parasite feeds off the host and gives nothing back. Some parasites may harm their hosts. Head lice do not harm humans.

Lice suck blood from the host’s body. They need to feed every hour and a half. The bloodsucking causes itching and irritation in the person infested with lice. People can sometimes feel the insects crawling through their hair.

**A growing problem**

A female louse may attach an oval-shaped egg to a person’s hair about one-half inch from the scalp. That spot is where the best hatching temperature is. The egg hatches after seven to 10 days. When an egg hatches, the empty shell is called a nit. If people get head lice, they may need a special shampoo from the doctor. They can also use a nit comb to remove nits and live lice. This treatment takes a lot of work. The most important thing to do is to remove the eggs from the hair. According to experts, it is not as important to wash all bedding, stuffed animals and clothing. Lice cannot usually live for more than 12 hours away from a person’s hair.

**Preventing lice**

To avoid getting lice, try not to share hats, scarves, helmers or hairbrushes with other kids. At slumber parties or when playing, try not to have head-to-head contact with other kids. Lice can’t fly, but they can move from one head to another.

**What to do**

Lice are hard to get rid of. Lice products that require a prescription will probably not get rid of all the lice on someone’s hair. Head lice have probably developed resistance to these products. If people get head lice, they may need a special shampoo from the doctor. They can also use a nit comb to remove nits and live lice. This treatment takes a lot of work.

**Resources**

On the Web:  
— the itchy, microscopic insects
— the Mini Page on Facebook
— bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!

**Try ‘n’ Find**

Words that remind us of lice are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

**Cook’s Corner**

**Toasted Tortellini**

You’ll need:

- 1/2 cups chopped fresh basil  
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

Cook for 1 minute to heat through.

6. most sneakers have them (5)

7. where art is displayed (7)

9. The bloodsucking causes itching and irritation in the person infested with lice. People can sometimes feel the insects crawling through their hair.

**Tea Towels for Kids**

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each clue. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

**Mini Jokes**

Larry: What do you call a head louse on a bald person?  
Lars: Homeless!”

**Eco Note**

Climate change is affecting environments worldwide. Forests, grasslands, deserts and oceans are heating up. Scientists fear that climate change will change weather patterns worldwide. Dry areas could be hit by severe droughts, while wet areas could see more floods. Other weather events, such as hurricanes and massive snowstorms, are becoming more common. This suggests climate change may already be taking effect.

**For later:**

Look in your newspaper for articles about other types of pests.

**Teachers:**

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!

**Try ‘n’ Find**

Words that remind us of lice are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

- 1 cup pasta or pizza sauce of your choice
- 12 ounces cheese-filled tortellini
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup reduced-sodium dry bread crumbs
- 3 cups whole milk
- 3/4 cup cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cups chopped fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 cup pasta or pizza sauce of your choice
- 12 ounces cheese-filled tortellini

You’ll need:

- 1/2 cups chopped fresh basil
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- 1 cup pasta or pizza sauce of your choice
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup reduced-sodium dry bread crumbs

What to do:

1. Lice are about these little bloodsucking critters. Let’s get ahead of lice with some information.

More kids are infested with head lice than ever before. Experts believe this is because kids have more contact with one another than adults do. They are more likely to come in contact with each other while playing, for example.

2. Girls are more likely to get lice than boys. Girls usually have longer hair, which means it may touch other hair more often.

3. What a cat’s claws do (7)

4. It has wings and slides (10)

5. colorful plastic men (5)

6. most sneakers have them (5)

7. where art is displayed (7)