



Lice Aren't Nice



photo courtesy CDC

Mini Fact:
Adult head lice are about 2 to 3 mm long.



photo © Martin Bowra | Dreamstime.com

A special fine-toothed comb can be used to remove lice and nits from the hair.

You and your family may have had to deal with head lice — the itchy, microscopic insects that love human hair.

More kids are infested with head lice than ever before. Experts believe this is because kids are with other kids so much, in day care, classrooms and after-school activities. Experts think between 6 and 12 million American kids get head lice each year.

Let's get ahead of lice with some information about these little bloodsucking critters.

It's not about dirt

Some people believe that people who get lice are dirty. This is not true. In fact, it is just the opposite.

Lice like clean hair. It is harder for them to cling to dirty, oily hair.

Lice infest children more than adults. This is probably 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.



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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 louse egg is called a nit.

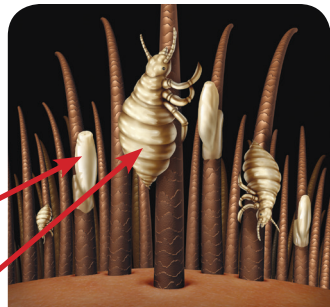


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Nit
Louse

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What to do

Lice are hard to get rid of. Lice products sold without 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.

The most important thing to do is to remove live lice and nits 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, helmets 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.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPlicefaq
- youtu.be/kAE458NjsrQ

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:

- BRUSH, CLEAN, COMB,
- EGG, GIRLS, HAIR, HAT,
- HEAD, HELMET, HOST,
- HUMANS, INFEST,
- INSECT, IRRITATION,
- ITCH, LICE, LOUSE,
- NIT, PARASITE, PEST,
- SCARF, SHAMPOO,
- TREATMENT.

K B I N S E C T N E S U O L H
 O E G G A J L O S C A R F F E
 T S E F N I H T N T S O H S A
 P E S T T T R E A T M E N T D
 F S N A M U H B M O C I D V Y
 G M H R I A H V B H S U R B X
 I R R I T A T I O N I T C H A
 R I C L E A N Q I T E M L E H
 L E C I L Q N J S H A M P O O
 S E N I T E T I S A R A P Z P



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 flooding. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and massive snowstorms, are becoming more common. This suggests climate change may already be taking effect.

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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!



Cook's Corner

Toasted Tortellini

You'll need:

- 12 ounces cheese-filled tortellini
- 1 cup pasta or pizza sauce of your choice
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup reduced-sodium dry bread crumbs

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



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Cook tortellini according to package directions, then drain. Heat pasta sauce in a saucepan over medium heat.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add tortellini and cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently, until golden brown. Add bread crumbs and Parmesan and toss to coat. Cook for 1 minute to heat through.
3. Spoon warm pasta sauce onto individual plates. Arrange pasta over sauce and top with basil. Serves 4.

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com).

7 Little Words 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 the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. ringing clock that wakes you (5) _____
2. hammer or saw (4) _____
3. what a cat's claws do (7) _____
4. it has swings and slides (10) _____
5. colorful plastic shoes (5) _____
6. most sneakers have them (5) _____
7. where art is displayed (7) _____

AT	CS	PLA	OL
LA	SCR	UND	CRO
CH	ARM	CES	ERY
GALL	YGRO	TO	AL

Answers: alarm, tool, scratch, playground, Crows, laces, gallery.

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