

Lice Prevention Tips:

From the Advice on Lice, Inc. and the National Pediculosis Association

Prevention of head lice is easily accomplished by teaching children not to share items such as brushes and combs, hats, scarves, headbands, and any other head gear. It is also important for parents and caretakers to learn how to identify head lice and nits so that they can establish a routine of inspecting a child's hair to look for lice or nits once a week as a means of detecting an infestation as early as possible. It is never appropriate to send a child to school with untreated head lice. It is always necessary to inform the school when an infestation is detected, and follow the appropriate procedures for re-admittance after treatment. It is also necessary to notify parents and families of anyone who has direct contact with the infested person in the recent past.

An estimated 6 to 12 million children get head lice each year, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Prevalence is in *no way related to cleanliness*. Transmission of head lice most often occurs by head – to- head contact, but can also be the result of shared bedding or clothing, brushes, combs, hats, or other headgear or head rests.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can a person have nits but not have lice?

Not really. If the person has been treated with something to kill the lice, then they may have nits without bugs, but an untreated head with nits must also have at least one adult female louse.

If a person is treated with an OTC product, doesn't that mean all the nits are dead?

No. These products are not designed to kill the louse that is developing inside the nit. There is only a 20% chance that OTC products will render the nits unviable, and there is no efficient way to distinguish between viable and unviable nits. Thorough and diligent nit removal is the only option if eradication is to be achieved.

What is the life cycle of lice?

A nit will hatch between 7 and 10 days after an adult female louse has laid it. The nymph will grow and molt 3 times in the next 10 to 12 days to become an adult. There is usually 1 male louse to every 5 female lice, and the females need to mate once before laying nits for the rest of their lives. The females usually lay one nit every 3 to 4 hours, and they tend to live for a total of 30 to 32 days.

What is the best tool for nit combing?

Advice on Lice Inc. strongly recommends the patented NPA Lice Meister Comb. There are other items on the market, but it is their finding that some of these combs cause more discomfort for the person on whom they are being used. The plastic combs that are found inside the treatment boxes are not effective. For more information on the Lice Meister Comb please refer to the NPA (National Pediculosis Association) website, www.headlice.org.