

The Friends your Children can Bring Home from School!



Well it's back to school and your children will be excited to see old friends, make new friends, and have a great year. However, your children may bring home some unwelcome visitors! **Lice.** The sound of name is revolting, and most parents will say ***"my children are clean, how does this happen?"***

What are Head Lice?

Head lice are small wingless insects (bugs) that reside on your hair and scalp. Lice are parasites that feed on very small amounts of your blood. Lice bites may cause constant scratching and lead to skin irritation or even infection.

Who is at risk for getting head lice?

Anyone can get head lice, but they are more common among school-aged children. Head lice spread more easily amongst children age 3-12 year of age, because they share their belongings and play in close proximity to each other.

A Head louse does not happen because someone's hair is dirty. Head lice are very contagious. No matter how many times you or your child might take a shower or wash his or her hair; it's still possible to get head lice from head-to-head contact with someone already infested with lice. You can also get head lice if you share hats, towels, pillows, combs or brushes with someone who has head lice.

What can you do to prevent head lice?

It may be difficult to prevent head lice from spreading amongst children, but the following are some steps you can take to help keep lice away.

- Ask your child not to share combs, brushes, or hair decorations.
- Ask your child not to try on hats that belong to other children
- If your child will be sleeping over, be sure they pack their own pillows and towels from home to lessen possible transmission.

What are the signs of head lice?

Because head lice move very fast, they are not always easy to see. Here's what you watch for:

- Frequent scratching
- Small red bumps or sores on the scalp, neck and shoulders.
- Lice eggs, also called nits, which look like tiny, oval shaped, white or clear dots. Sometimes they can look like grains of sand but they stick to the hair root instead of coming off the scalp. Nits usually stick at an angle on hair shafts.

How can I treat lice?

You can use over-the-counter or prescription products. These products contain pesticides and other chemicals. So if you are pregnant, nursing, have allergies or asthma you may want to talk to your family doctor.

These products don't usually kill all the nits. So to reduce the risk of another infestation, pick the remaining lice and nits by hand or using a special comb to remove them. Comb through all of the hair one section at a time every 3 days or more often for at least 2 weeks or until you stop seeing head lice and nits.

Also, wash all bed linen, towels, and clothing recently worn by the person who had head lice in hot water. Vacuum anything that can't be washed such as the couch, carpets, car seats, and any stuffed animals.

Tip of the Week:

If you think someone in the family has head lice, it's a good idea to check everyone in the family.

