

Head Lice

The head louse is a tiny, parasitic insect that can be found in the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people. Head lice feed on human blood several times a day, and live close to the human scalp. It has nothing to do with cleanliness or personal hygiene in the home or school. Head lice are more commonly seen during the fall and spring season.

The tiny parasites can't fly or jump. They move by crawling. Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Anyone who comes in head-to-head contact with someone who already has head lice is at greatest risk. Uncommonly, head lice may be spread by sharing clothing or belongings such as hats, combs, towels, barrettes, headphones, etc. onto which lice or nits may have crawled or fallen. So, you may want to encourage your child not to share these items with anyone else, whether they may have lice or not.

Some signs and symptoms of head lice infestation may include:

- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair

- Itching

- Irritability and difficulty sleeping

- Sores on scalp caused by scratching

- Lice eggs (called nits) found on hair shafts close to the skin's surface

If you notice any signs or symptoms of head lice, please check by parting your child's hair into small sections and looking for lice and nits on the scalp, behind the ears, and around the nape of the neck. Find an area with bright light. You may also call the school nurse and ask her to check your child's hair. If you find head lice don't panic. Contact your pharmacist or physician concerning treatment for head lice.