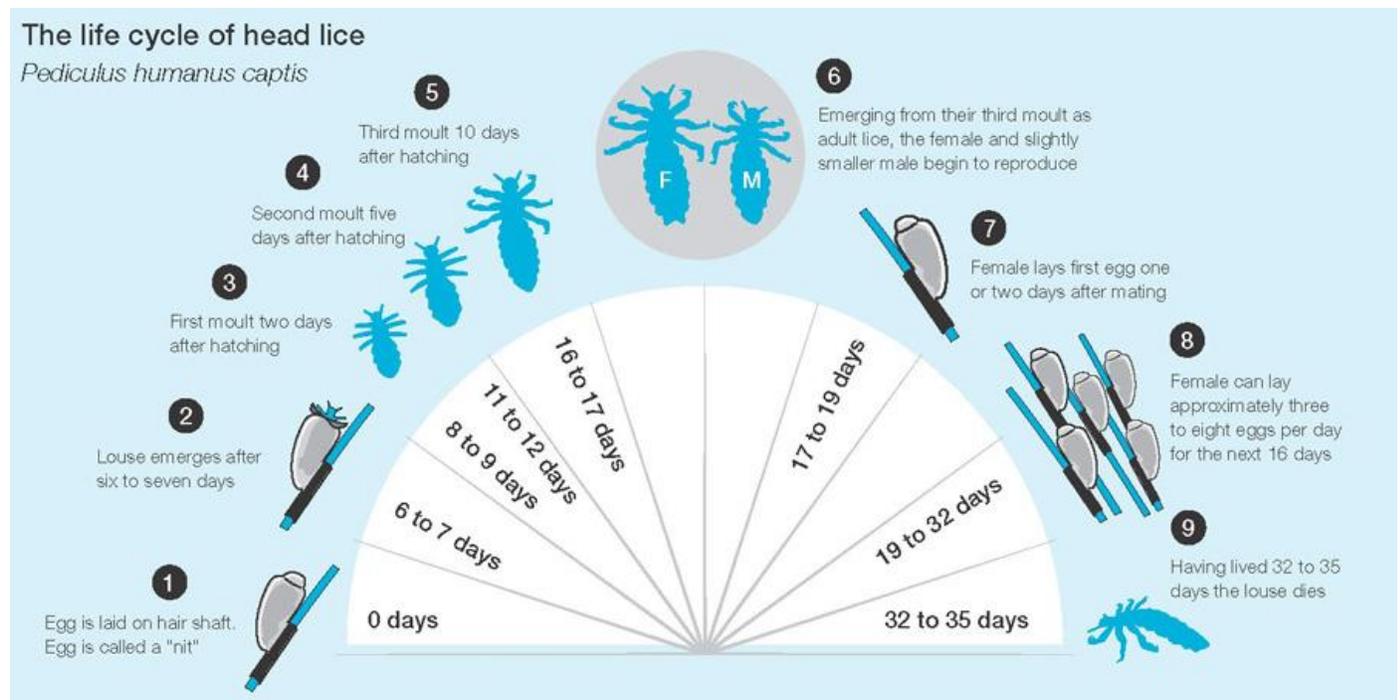


# Head Lice Fact Sheet

## What are lice?

1. Lice, or Pediculosis are small tan to grayish-white insects about the size of a sesame seed and have six legs.
2. They don't usually carry disease but, can cause your child and family discomfort, stress and sometimes skin irritation.
3. Lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head and lay from 50 to 150 eggs. To live, adult lice need to feed on blood every 3 to 6 hours. If the louse falls off a person, it dies within 2 days.



## How do I know if my child has head lice and if so, how did they get it?

1. Itching is the first sign of head lice. Check your child's head and scalp all over especially behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the neck when scratching begins.



2. Look for lice and their eggs or "nits." You may see nits before you find a louse because each louse can lay up to 150 eggs.



3. If you know of another child with head lice, be alert that your child may contract lice too. There is no incubation period. When live lice move from one child's head to another; they are "home" and begin laying eggs immediately.
4. Children get lice from other children. They move from child to child through head to head contact.



5. Lice cannot hop, jump or fly but can crawl from child to child anytime children are close together; during play, sports or even nap time.

6. Sharing combs, brushes, hair fasteners, hats, caps, coats, neck scarves and even head phones can spread lice. Sharing a locker or cubby is another way to spread lice.
7. A child isn't sick or unclean if they have head lice. Taking baths won't kill lice or keep children from getting lice.

### **What should I do if I think my child has head lice?**

1. You can take care of your child's head lice problem at home without a visit to the doctor. Treatment should be with a shampoo or cream rinse purchased without a prescription at the drug store.
2. After the first treatment you may not see live lice but you might see nits. If the nits (lice eggs) are attached to the strands of hair they are probably not dead. This means live lice could soon hatch from the remaining eggs.
3. That is why after treatment it is important to comb out the nits left in your child's hair with a special nit comb.
4. Nits are very tiny. They are oval shaped yellow to white in color. They attach to the hair shaft at the scalp with a waterproof cement-like substance. They can be difficult to remove.
5. A second treatment and then a second combing are necessary. Even after thoroughly using the nit comb. Live lice or nits could still be hiding somewhere on your child's head.
6. If you choose, there are several places to take your child and pay for them to shampoo and remove nits.
7. Be sure to let your school nurse that your child has had head lice.

## How do I keep lice from coming back?

1. Follow the directions on the lice treatment package. Not following directions, is the biggest reason why it doesn't work.
2. If your child has extra long hair, you may need to use a second bottle.
3. Comb out the nits left after treatment. Do this by sliding the nit up the hair shaft with your fingers or using the nit comb.
4. Most of the time a second treatment is necessary. If the nits are not killed or removed they will hatch and your child will have lice again.
5. Launder clothing and bedding so their aren't any live lice on the clothing or bedding. Laundry water should be 130 degrees Fahrenheit to kill lice.



6. Dry cleaning kills lice and their nits in clothing that can't be washed
7. Sealing clothing, stuffed toys, pillows, blankets or other small soft items for two weeks in tightly closed plastic bags will kill both lice and nits.
8. Vacuum and sweep carpets, furniture and curtains to pick up any live lice or nits that may have fallen off or crawled



9. Soak combs, brushes and other washable items for one hour in one of the approved lice shampoos or soak them for 5-10 minutes in pan of 130 degree hot water
10. Teach your children not to share combs, brushes and other personal items with children.
11. Separate jackets, hats and other personal items in the classroom
12. Wear hair up in braids and buns, etc.
13. Check your child's hair from time to time for signs of lice.