

LICE 101

Everything you really didn't want to know about lice!

Definitions	
Lice- more than one <i>louse</i>	Nit-eggs, dead or alive of a louse
Louse-small insect that lives on the scalp	Parasite-lives off another, in this case the blood of humans
Pediculosis-having an infestation of lice	Infestation-having an insect present, in this case, in your head
Myths	Truths
Lice are easy to get	Lice are spread only by head to head contact. They are much harder to get than a cold, flu, ear infection, pink eye, strep throat, food poisoning or impetigo.
You can get lice from your dog, guinea pig or other animal	Lice are species specific. You can only get human lice from another human. You cannot get another animal's lice
Lice are often passed via hats and helmet	Rarely, but possible. Hairbrushes, pillows and sheets are much more common modes of transmission
School is a common place for lice transmission	School is a VERY RARE source of transmission. Much more common are family members, overnight guests and playmates who spent a large amount of time together
Poor hygiene contributes to lice	Hygiene makes absolutely no difference. Lice actually like clean hair more than dirty. You get lice by close personal contact with someone else who has lice, not by being dirty
Lice can jump or fly from one person to another	Lice can only crawl. They can neither fly nor jump. They must crawl from one person to another
Any nits left in the hair can cause lice to come back	Any nits farther away than ¼ to ½ on the hair shaft are ALREADY HATCHED and pose no risk to others
Eggs or nits can fall out of the hair, hatch and cause lice in another person	Nits are cemented to the hair and very hard to remove. They cannot fall off. Newly hatched larvae must find a head quickly or will die.
Lice can live a long time	Lice live only 1-2 days off the head
All members of a family should be treated if one person has lice	Only the person with lice should be treated. Lice shampoos are INSECTICIDES and can be dangerous if used incorrectly or too frequently. Household members and close contacts should be checked, but only treat those who actually have lice. The house should NOT be sprayed with insecticide, nor used on clothing or other items.
Checking a classroom when one student has lice can prevent lice from spreading	Classroom transmission is EXCEEDINGLY RARE and a waste of valuable teaching time. Checking family members and close playmates is much more appropriate
Avoiding lice is important as they spread disease	Lice do not spread any known disease. They are annoying and icky, but cause no disease.