

Dipartimento  
di Prevenzione  
Medico



S.I.T.R.A.



# LICE

## ALL YOU HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT LICE

**WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?**

HOW CAN I DETECT HEAD LICE?

**HOW CAN I PREVENT HEAD LICE?**

HOW CAN I TREAT THE INFESTATION?

**NITS POLICIES**



## WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

Head lice are small (2/3 mm long) parasitic insects exquisitely adapted to living on our heads and feeding on our blood. A female louse may deposit a lot of eggs (called nits) at a rate of about 8-10 each day. A louse hatches from its egg after about 8 days of development, and begins to feed, grow and develop until it attains the adult stage about 9-12 days after hatching. Lice can't survive away from our heads because they need to stay close to the source of warmth and food. The infestation of head lice is termed pediculiasis, and the associated "disease" pediculosis. Head lice are equal opportunity parasites; they do not respect socio-economic class distinctions. **Their presence does not connote a lack of hygiene or sanitation practiced by their host.** Head lice don't cause harm, and they are not known to transmit infectious agents from person-to-person. Head lice are mainly acquired by direct head-to-head contact with an infested person's hair, but may be transferred with shared combs, hats, headphones, pillows, scarves and other hair accessories. **Neither able to fly or jump,** lice can move very quickly on our heads and they remain firmly stuck to the hair.



## HOW CAN I DETECT HEAD LICE?

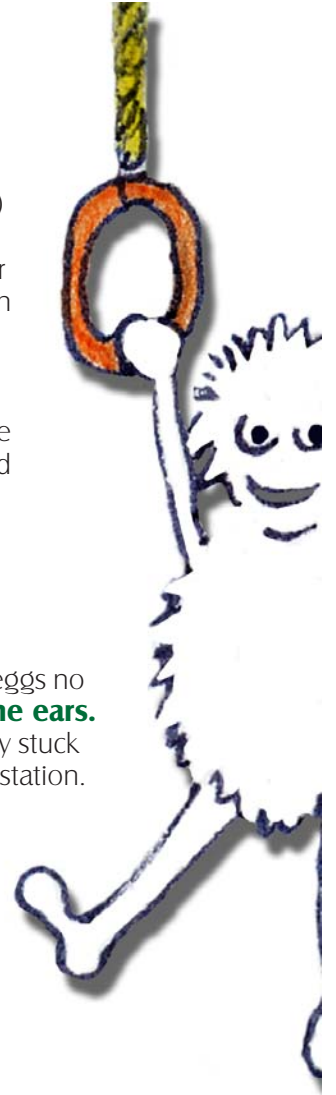
Infestation usually shows with a very itchy feeling of the head. Lice lay nits (white/gray eggs no bigger than the head of a pin) **on the head, on the back of the neck, or behind the ears.** The white empty egg cases, nits, are different from dandruff because they remain firmly stuck to the hair shaft. Nits are easy to see and often this is the first sign you notice of an infestation.

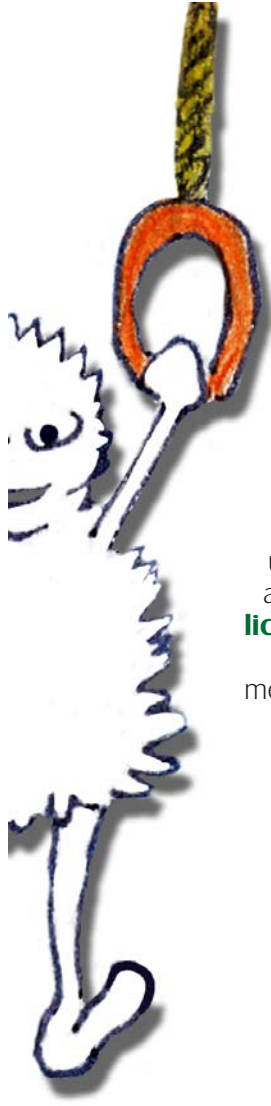


## HOW CAN I PREVENT HEAD LICE?

If you don't want to have head lice just follow these simple steps:

-  **Hair washing at least twice a week**
-  **Hair brushing everyday**





 Brushes, combs should be soaked

 Check your childrens' hair everyday

 Tell your children not to share brushes, combs, hats, headphones, headbands and clothes with anyone else.

Don't use pediculicides for prevention. It's unusefull!

**Treatment should be considered only when active lice or viable eggs are observed.**

## **HOW CAN I TREAT THE INFESTATION?**

Several options exist to eliminate the infestation: shampoos, lotions and creams. They must be used very carefully and the attached instruction must be followed. Another treatment is needed after 7/10 days from the former one to eliminate lice that may have survived. **If you have head lice in your family think of every person you have come into contact with and tell them.**

Brushes, combs, and hair accessories should be soaked in hot water for one hour, washed with medicated shampoo. All the carpets and furniture in the house should be vacuumed, and bedding, clothing and stuffed animals should be machine washed (60°C to kill both lice and nits). If machine wash is not suitable, use dry clean as well. Do not use pediculicides in the environment.



## **NITS POLICIES**

**Parents should check their children's hair at least twice a week if at school there are signs of an infestation;** when itchy feeling, active lice or viable eggs are

observed, call your GP or your Local Health Department Nurse to have all the informations about treatment and what to do if you live in a community.



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