

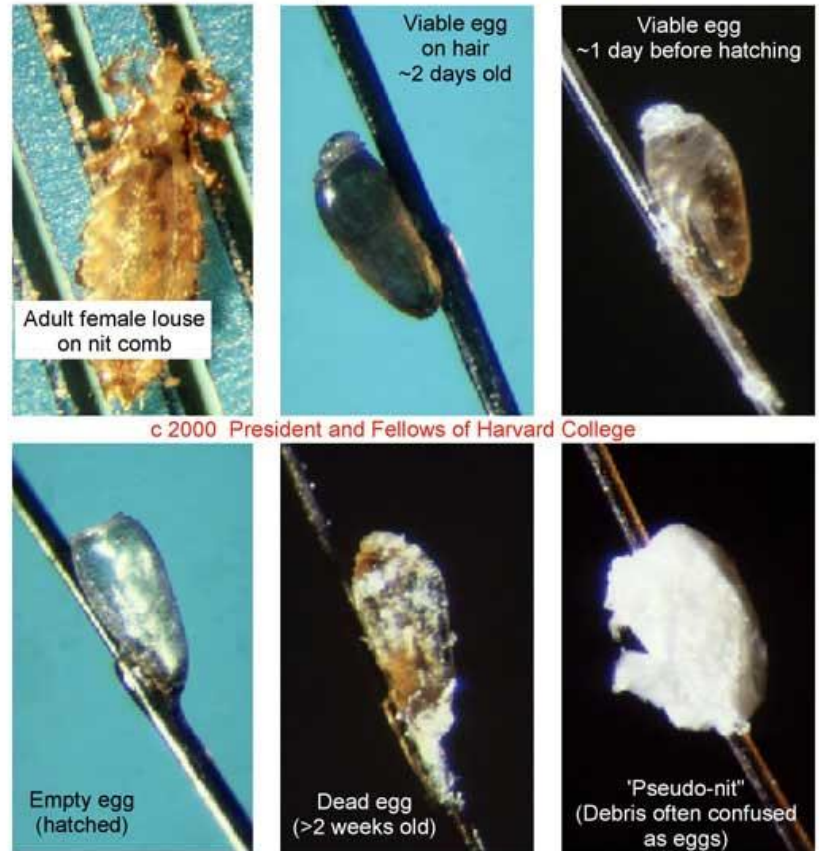
Head Lice

Treatment Information
Lynd Public School

The Facts

- Human Head Lice do not: fly, jump, hop, live on pets, or carry diseases.
- Human head Lice do: spread by direct head contact with an infected person via hair items, hats, head phones, pillowcases, etc.
- Nits (lice eggs) are found within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the scalp and hatch within 7-10 days. Young lice become adult lice and are able to reproduce within 8-10 days. Adult lice lay 5-10 nits per day and have a total life span of about 30 days.
- Nits (lice eggs) vary in color from white or translucent to brown or grey and are attached to the hair shaft with a cement-like substance. They feed on human blood and can only live 24-48 hours off the head.

Images to assist in the identification of head lice and their eggs.
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>



[Return to text](#)

The School's Role in Screening

- When a case of head lice is suspected, the student will be assessed by the school staff.
- If a case is confirmed, the parent/guardian will be notified to arrange for treatment and dismissal from school.
- From there, a letter will be sent out to parents/guardians of the students that have been directly exposed.
- Siblings and students in close contact with students identified as having lice will be screened immediately.
- The custodian(s) will be notified and the proper cleaning procedures will take place immediately.

Attendance

- Children with lice nits (eggs), but no live lice, are allowed to attend school.
- Children with live lice are not allowed to attend school. A child with live lice will be sent home. The child will be allowed to return to school once the live lice have been eliminated.
- Appropriate measures need to be taken to eliminate the live lice.

Nit Removal



- **NIT REMOVAL IS THE KEY TO TREATING HEAD LICE!**
 - Hold the hair strand near the scalp with one hand.
 - With the other hand, grab the nit with your fingernails (thumb and index finger) and pull it off the hair shaft. This may also be done with a nit comb.
 - Repeat this procedure until all hair nits are removed.
 - Place nits in a plastic lined container and when process is finished put the closed container in the garbage outside.
 - To ensure that all nits are removed from the head, check for nits daily for several days and remove them as soon as possible.

Pediculicides

- Definition: medications used to treat head lice.
- No pediculicide kills all nits (eggs).
- Therefore, even when using pediculides, regular checks and nit **removal with a nit comb** or fingernails is a **MUST!**

Pediculicides

- Over the Counter medications:
 - Pyrethrins and permethrin (i.e. **Nix, Rid, Eliminite, Acticin, Lynclear**) compounds are considered safe and effective first line pediculicide treatments with a 78% success rate (“Drugs for head lice,” 2005, p.68).
 - Malathion (i.e. Ovide, Derbac) is effective against lice resistant to permethrin. It is the fastest killing and most ovicidal pediculicide with 98% success rate, however it is highly flammable (“Drugs for head lice,” 2005, p.68-69).
- Prescription only medication:
 - Lindane (Kwell) has been used in the past to treat chronic head lice, but has become less effective over the past 20 years. FDA has issued a public health advisory on its safety due to potential neurotoxicity (“Drugs for head lice,” 2005, p.69).



WARNING!

- It has been suggested that improper use of pediculicides has contributed to lice resistance.
- Follow directions very carefully when using a pediculicide product.
 - Do not use more than the recommended dose.
 - Do not use it more often than recommended.
 - Do not use it longer than recommended.
 - Do not use it “just in case”.
 - Apply to dry/wet hair as directed.
- Sprays developed to kill lice or other insects are **not recommended** to use on hair or furniture/ carpets in the home.

Alternatives

- Many alternatives to over the counter products and head lice prescriptions have been suggested.
- Although there is little scientific evidence to support such methods, successful treatment has been reported using several alternative methods.
- **The MDH will not recommend these treatments without further evidence of their effectiveness.**
- However, MDH does acknowledge that some people turn to alternative treatments when conventional treatments have not worked, or when there is a concern about the toxicity of using head lice control products repeatedly (Minnesota Department of Health, 2006).

Olive Oil Treatments

- Step 1
 - Wash hair with Baby Shampoo or another over the counter shampoo. Do not use conditioner. Dry hair thoroughly.
- Step 2
 - Apply a suffocating agent such as olive oil or vegetable oil (not petroleum gel) liberally to scalp and cover for 8 hours with shower cap.
- Step 3
 - Comb hair with regular comb to work out snarls. Then comb hair with nit comb (or fingernails) and warm vinegar water to remove nits. To prevent contamination of nit free hair with hair containing nits, separate hair into sections and rinse comb under hot running water before wiping with paper towel to remove dead nits. Place the dead nits in plastic lined bag and when finished put the tied liner in the garbage outside.
- Step 4
 - Shampoo hair again 2-3 times to remove the oil. After each shampoo repeat process of combing with regular comb and then nit comb to remove nits.
- Repeat steps 1-4 every four days for three weeks.

Recurrent Lice

- Although lice cannot live off of the hair shaft for more than 48 hours, in that time they can migrate from one person's head to another's via transport objects.
- Don't let your home be a breeding ground for lice.
- Clean your home!



- Step 1
 - Vacuum carpet, rugs, furniture, and car seats.
- Step 2
 - Wash all linens, coats, and hats in hot water and dry in dryer at highest temperature.
- Step 3
 - Boil brushes, combs and hair accessories.
- Step 4
 - Thoroughly clean telephones and headphones. Put stuffed animals in sealed bags for 2 weeks.

References

- Bucci, K. (2002). Treatment-resistant scabies and lice infections. *Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants*, 15, 51-58.
- Drugs for head lice. (2005, August). *The Medical Letter*, 47, 68-70. Retrieved February 23, 2006 from Ovid database.
- *Head Lice*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 10, 2006 from The Ohio State University Web site:
http://ohioline.osu.edu/b893/images/b893_13.jpg&imgrefurl=http://ohioline.osu.edu/b893/b893_13.html&h=250&w=184&sz=6&tbnid=flRVIp8kQo713M:&tbnh=106&tbnw=78&hl=en&start=3&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dnit%2Bcomb%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Den%26lr%3D%26sa%3DG
- *Head Lice Information*. (2000). Retrieved February 20, 2006 from Harvard School of Public Health Web site:
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html#Essential>
- *Head Lice: A Treatment Guide*. (2005). Retrieved February 22, 2006 from Minnesota Department of Health Web site:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/headlice/treatment.html>
- *Treating Head Lice Infestation*. (2005). Retrieved March 10, 2006 from Center for Disease Control and Prevention Web site:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsht_head_lice_treating.htm
- Treatment and Prevention. (2001). *A Guide to Head Lice* (Pamphlet). St. Cloud Area School District 742: Nursing Department.
- *Update on Head Lice for Medical Providers*. (2000.). Retrieved January 25, 2006 from Minnesota Department of Health Web site:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/dpc/ades/lice/headlice.htm>