

**Yellow-white in colour, head lice live on the human head and spread through head to head contact.**

## HEAD LICE

Head lice are small, yellow-white wingless insects that live and feed on the human head. They lay eggs (nits) on human hair that hatch within 7 days. The lice move from one person to another through head to head contact with an infested person. This includes sharing personal items such as clothing, combs and head/hair accessories.

Lice are easily spread particularly among children because they are more likely to have close contact with other children. Although lice can be transmitted by personal items, the lice cannot survive longer than 24 hours off the human head.

## DETECTING HEAD LICE

Head lice may be experienced by anyone, regardless of personal hygiene. Consequently, it is important to regularly look for lice and eggs. In less than half of all head lice cases, itching is a symptom of head lice. Eggs are usually quite visible, as they are laid within 1.5 cm of the scalp and resemble dandruff. Unlike dandruff, the eggs stick to the scalp and are very difficult to remove.

Small red dots behind the ears and the nape of the neck are often signs of head lice bites. Parents should regularly check their children for head lice. If lice are found, the child's hair must be treated (See: Head lice – Treatment and prevention).

## TO DISCOVER IF LICE ARE PRESENT IN HAIR:

Comb conditioner through dry unknotted hair. The conditioner stuns the lice for approximately 20 minutes, which makes it difficult for them to grip onto the hair or move around.

Immediately comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth, head lice comb.

Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper tissue.

Inspect the tissue and comb for lice and eggs.

Repeat the steps four to five times for every section of hair.

## SEE ALSO:

- Head lice - Treatment & prevention

## CONTACT DETAILS

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