

# FACTS ABOUT HEAD LICE

- **What does head lice look like?** Though very small, head lice can be seen by the human eye. They live in human hair, draw blood from the skin, and lay eggs (called nits) on the hair shaft. The nits may be found less than 1/2 inch from the scalp and most often on hair at the back of the head in the neck region. Children may complain of “feeling something crawling in their hair” or complain of an itchy head.
- **Is your child at risk?** Yes. Today, kids can be placed into two groups: Those with head lice and those at risk for getting head lice. Head lice will spread as long as children play together. They are found in all social classes and in all countries. Children in child care, preschools, grade or middle schools are at risk. Head lice are NOT a sign of being dirty.
- **What can you do?** Parents are the key to looking for and treating head lice! The Iowa Department of Public Health advises parents to spend 15 minutes each week on each child carefully looking for head lice or nits.
- **Additional tips:**
  1. Give each child his or her own comb or brush.
  2. Teach your child NOT to share hats, scarves, brushes, combs, and hair fasteners.
  3. Look for lice on all members of your household.

Treatment: The Iowa Department of Public Health recommends a 14-day treatment process. You may use over-the-counter products. They are safe and not costly. Mark your calendar to help you keep track of treatment.



- Write down the date you saw head lice \_\_\_\_\_
- On Day 1: Wash hair with over-the-counter medicated head-lice shampoo. **Read and follow all directions on the shampoo.**
- Days 2-7: Wash the hair using your regular shampoo. Rinse. Apply hair conditioner to make the hair slippery. **COMB** the hair the entire length from the scalp to end of hair. Wipe the comb between each stroke with a paper towel. Wiping the comb removes any lice or nits. Keep hair wet while combing. **COMB** hair at least 15-20 minutes. **COMB** all of hair.
- Day 8: Wash hair with over-the-counter medicated head-lice shampoo. Read and follow all directions on the shampoo.
- Days 9-14: Wash the hair using regular shampoo. Rinse. Apply hair conditioner to make the hair slippery. **COMB** the hair the entire length from the scalp to the end of hair. Wipe the comb between each stroke with a paper towel. Wiping the comb removes any lice or nits. Keep hair wet while combing. **COMB** hair at least 15-20 minutes. **COMB** all of hair.
- Use the calendar below to keep track of the treatment.

<input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 Date _____ Use medicated shampoo	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 6 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 7 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB
<input type="checkbox"/> Day 8 Use medicated shampoo	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 9 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 10 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 11 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 12 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 13 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 14 Use regular shampoo, conditioner and COMB

# Additional Tips

- **Treat all family members who have lice.** Use the 14-day treatment process. Rinse combs and brushes in very hot water.
- **Only ordinary house cleaning, vacuuming, and laundry are needed.** No special effort or sprays are needed to clean your home. Only dead or dying lice are found on clothing, bedding, or furniture.

## What about day care, preschool or school?

- **There is no need for children to be sent home or to miss day care or school.** Child care providers should ask parents to check their children's hair to control outbreaks.
- **School officials should ask parents to check their children's hair at least weekly.**
- **Parents should check their own children and their playmates.**
- **Child care and schools should notify parents when an outbreak occurs.**

# SAY GOODBYE TO HEAD LICE



Carefully following the steps listed in this brochure can help you say good-bye to head lice. For additional help, call the Healthy Families Line at **1-800-369-2229**.

If you think your child has head lice or nits, contact the Healthy Families Line for up-to-date treatment information. The Healthy Families Line is open 24 hours each day and all days of the year.

**Call now.**  
**1-800-369-2229 or**  
**TTY 1-800-735-2942.**

Early treatment is the key to getting rid of lice!



Iowa Department of Public Health  
Promoting and protecting the health of Iowans

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GETTING RID OF

# HEAD LICE

