



Community Health Connections

The Bantam Commons
120 Hollywood Drive, Suite 201
Butler, PA 16001
Phone: (724) 283-0990
Fax: (724) 283-1012
Website: www.hcqu.org

Fact Sheet

Super Head Lice

What is Super Head Lice?

Head Lice are tiny, wingless, parasite insects that live and feed on blood from your scalp. Head Lice are very tiny and are about the size of a strawberry seed. Super Head Lice simply are lice that have become resistant to over the counter medications and require medical attention to rid you of the parasites.

How common is Head Lice?

Head Lice are a very common problem. It is the second most common communicable disease in school children, second only to the common cold. Therefore, people at day programs or schools are at risk of getting Head Lice.

What are the symptoms of Head Lice?

Among Head Lice symptoms is the unnerving tickling sensation on your scalp, as if something is moving or crawling on your scalp. Scratching of your scalp, neck, and shoulders will be present due to the Lice's saliva causing an allergic reaction when it's feeding. There may be small red bumps on the scalp, neck, and shoulders. You will see tiny little "nits" on the shaft of the hair. Nits are the Head Lice eggs that are attached to a hair strand. Nits take about 6 to 9 days to hatch and take about 7 days to become adults. Nits may resemble dandruff and they are very hard to comb out. Adult Lice can live up to 30 days. An adult female can lay 8 nits every day. To live they must feed several times a day and will die if off the person in 1 to 2 days.

Lice do not carry diseases, but you may scratch so vigorously that you cause abrasions and secondary skin infections.

How is Head Lice spread?

Head Lice are spread by close contact, such as head to head. They DO NOT hop or jump. They can be spread by sharing hair brushes, combs, clips, ties, hats, coats, or any object that comes in contact of your head. They can also be spread by sharing pillows, on car head rests, and furniture that has been exposed to Head Lice and/or their nits. Playing sports with head to head contact also spreads lice.

How do I prevent Head Lice?

By not sharing personal items. Sometimes it is very hard to prevent due to the close proximity of personal items in closets, living together with other people who are infected, and by human contact.

Having Head Lice or Super Head Lice DOES NOT mean that you lack cleanliness or that your personal hygiene is poor, it is a parasite of opportunity.

What should I do if I think someone I know or I have Head Lice?

The best place to start is to contact the PCP to inquire what they think would be appropriate for the person.

Remember, not all Head Lice are Super Head Lice. Most Head Lice can be treated with over the counter shampoos, cream rinses, nit combs, and spray for furniture. Some times you will need to seal personal items in air tight bags for several days to kill the nits. Killing the Head Lice will also require cleaning of all items that have come in contact with the person who has the infestation. Bed sheets, hair combs, brushes, hats, goodies, furniture, and car seats are some examples of things that will need to be cleaned. Vacuuming the home is also important to collect any nits or lice on the floor or furniture.

When do I seek medical attention?

If you or someone you know has Head Lice and you can't rid the person or yourself of the parasite you need to seek medical attention. Also, seek medical attention if you believe that a secondary infection has occurred.

References

Mayoclinic.com Head Lice
CDC website on Head Lice/Super Head Lice