

**September is National Head Lice Prevention Month**  
*Submitted by Erik Cornelius, Community Health Services Department*

**WHAT IS HEAD LICE?**

Lice are small light gray bugs that live on the hair of your head and feed on human blood. They lay very small oval white eggs, called “nits”. Nits are not bigger than a grain of sand and are usually found glued to the hair at the back of the neck, above and behind the ears, and under barrettes or ponytails-but they can be found ANYWHERE on the hair.

Lice do not spread disease and should not cause a panic. However, lice are an annoying, frustrating problem that requires immediate attention.

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

Intense itching and scratching of the scalp are the main indication of head lice. Their presence can be confirmed by a close visual inspection of the hair and scalp under a good light. Look for whitish oval eggs (nits) adhering to the hair shafts about 1/4 inch from the scalp.

**PREVENTION**

Head lice can happen to anyone. It is not the result of dirty conditions or lack of personal hygiene. Head lice are transmitted by coming in direct contact with the hair or clothing of an infested person- they do not jump or fly. Don't allow the shared use of hats, combs, ribbons, scarves, coats, and sweaters as it can provide a way of spreading lice.

Parents / guardians should be aware of lice and its manifestations. It is recommended that parents / guardians make periodic hair inspections of their children, such as prior to the opening of school, and after vacations. Or simply remember, once a week, take a peek!

**NITS...NOW WHAT?**

If you suspect your child has head lice and are unsure what to do, you can contact your child's medical provider for treatment options. For additional questions about head lice and suggestions for proper cleaning of furniture, carpet, toys, and other non-washable items, feel free to contact Community Health Nursing Department at 920-869-4840.

Resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/> <http://www.headlice.org/faq/questions.htm>

