

HEAD LICE

The bug is *Pediculus humanus capitis*



From Wikipedia

- Usually affects pre-school children in child care setting, school children, and the household members of infested children.
- Symptoms are scalp itchiness, tickling feeling on the scalp, scalp irritability at night, and sore on scalp due to scratching
- Transmission is by direct head to head contact, by crawling. Head lice cannot fly or hop
- Also by sharing clothings and belongings.
- Female louse lay eggs near the base of the shaft of the hair. The eggs will hatch in 7 to 10 days

What is the Treatment?

1. Non-Pharmacologic Treatment

- ✓ All households must be checked and those affected must be treated at the same time
- ✓ Beddings, clothings should be hot washed
- ✓ Those that cannot be washed should be sealed in a plastic bag and left for 2 week to kill the lice
- ✓ Comb the hair using the special head lice comb to remove the lice. The comb can be dipped in vinegar that is said can help in removing the nits as well

2. Pharmacologic Treatment

- ✓ Apply the lotion / shampoo on the hair
- ✓ Leave it on the hair and scalp, washing it according to instruction on the box
- ✓ Do not wash the hair after 1-2 days
- ✓ If after 12 hours, comb the hair. If there still alive lice seen, consider using other lotion/ shampoo
- ✓ If dead lice seen, the treatment is working affectively
- ✓ Comb the hair every 2-3 days to remove the lice and nits to decrease the chance of re-infestation
- ✓ As most lotion / shampoo only kills the alive lice, repeat the application after 1 week to kill the newly hatched nymphs.

3. Lotion / Shampoos available

- ✓ Pyrethrin
- ✓ Permethrin
- ✓ Malathion

4. Second Line Treatment

- ✓ Lindane
- ✓ Overuse, misuse, or accidentally swallowing lindane can be toxic to the brain and other parts of the nervous system