

Pediculosis Capitis

What is it?

- **Pedoculosis Capitis** – head lice is a common and highly contagious infection that often occurs in day care centers, nurseries and schools
 - **Caused by**- infestation with the human head louse
- **Lice**- very small insects that feed on human blood, the female louse attaches her eggs/nits to the base of the hair near the scalp and the nits hatch 7 to 10 days later; can spread from child to child, head-to-head; lice eat only human blood, head lice crawl and are about 1-3 mm long, whitish-gray in color
 - **Adult Lice**- can't live more than 2 days on the human head
 - **Nit**- can stay alive up to 10 days off the body as on clothing, carpets, hairbrushes, about 0.5-1 mm, white and are firmly attached to the hair very close to the scalp



Signs and Symptoms:

- **Head Lice**- very itchy, small red bumps or sores on the scalp, neck and shoulders, occasionally lymph nodes behind the ears or in the neck may be tender or swollen, may also be seen in eyelashes causing the eyes to become irritated and red, may lead to infection and scabbing related to scratching

Facts:

- **At Risk**-anyone but children 3 to 11 are most likely to become infected, not related to the cleanliness of the environment or person, girls are more likely to get due to longer hair, most often seen in areas with close personal contact, schools, prisons, home, playgrounds, sports, camp

What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- for more information
 - **Treatment**- fine-toothed comb, over-the-counter medications to kill only the live lice, not the eggs, so reapply in 7 to 10 days to kill newly hatched lice, use medications as directed on the package; do not wash the hair 2 days after treatment and do not use conditioner, wear clean clothes and wash all clothes, linens in water > 130°F, dry using hot heat for 20 minutes or longer

