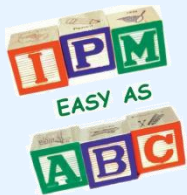


Head Lice

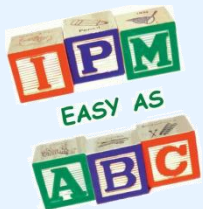
in Schools and Child Care
Centers

Nebraska Extension



Lice have become resistant to many over-the-counter products

- ❖ Some lice and nits may survive treatment even when used as directed.
- ❖ Resistant brands include Nix, Rid, and many store brand products.
- ❖ Resistant product active ingredients:
 - Pyrethrins, pyrethrum, permethrin, resmethrin, and other synthetic pyrethroids



Frustrated Parents May Blame School or Child Care Center for Head Lice

- ❖ Facilities can help identify early cases of head lice by checking children periodically.



Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County



Head Lice Family



- ❖ Female (size of a small grain of rice)
- ❖ Egg (nit)
 - Glued onto hair shaft about $\frac{1}{2}$ " from scalp
 - Nit is hard to remove
 - Glue is impervious to products claiming to dissolve it



Eggs hatch after 7-10 days

- ❖ Smallest stage louse is just a little larger than the nit
- ❖ Tiny and hard to see
- ❖ Recurrent infestations
 - Parents may not notice tiniest lice, think child is lice free, and stop treatments and combing

Adult female

Immature



Early stage louse

Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County



Head Lice Facts

- ❖ Feed only on head of humans, not other animals
- ❖ Feed primarily on children, but will infest adults
- ❖ Head lice spend most of their lives on their host



Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County



Head lice cannot fly or jump

- ❖ May be some transfer from combs, brushes, coats
- ❖ Researchers believe head-to-head contact is primary mode of transmission



Photo: Hemera Technologies Inc.



Research in schools looked at transmission of lice

- ❖ Used a school with a head lice outbreak
- ❖ Lice collected from kids
- ❖ Search for head lice in school classrooms
 - Carpeted floors were vacuumed with filter



Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County



In this study....

- ❖ 21% of children were infested
- ❖ Average number of lice:
30.1/infested child
- ❖ 91.5% classrooms were infested
- ❖ **No lice were recovered from
classroom floors**

Conclusion: Most transmission probably
by head-to-head contact



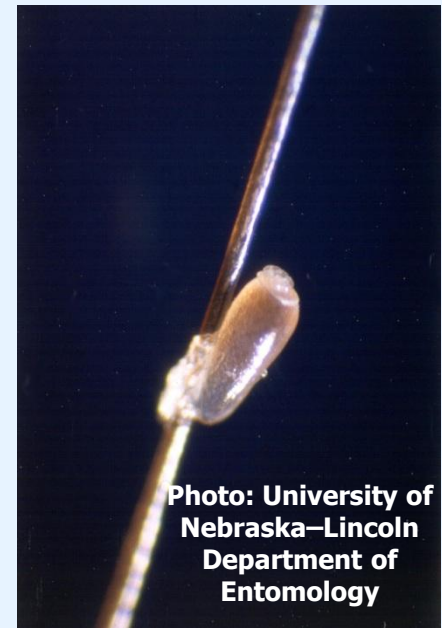
What about transmission via inanimate objects

❖ Combs and brushes

- No head lice found in brushes after brushing hair of infested children

❖ Examination of 1000 hats

- No lice found on hats, but 5500 lice were found on children who wore the hats



What can personnel do?

- ❖ Vacuum rugs and upholstered furniture regularly
- ❖ Be responsive to extra vacuuming, if asked
 - Sometimes, the appearance of extra effort is important
- ❖ It is a good idea to have cubbies so each child can store his/her outerwear



Never, ever, spray classrooms for lice

- ❖ It is a waste of time and money
- ❖ Unnecessary exposure to kids and staff who work in the facility



Head Lice Control is Up to Parents!

- ❖ Comb oil-saturated hair with a metal nit comb to remove eggs and lice
- ❖ An electronic comb (Robi Comb) will detect even tiny live lice, but not the eggs

➤ Useful monitoring device for DRY hair



Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

A videotape that demonstrates combing is available from UNL Extension

Website:

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/lice/>

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