



A Parent's Guide to Head Lice

Dear Parent and Guardian:

We understand that your student has a case of head lice. The intent of this letter is to inform you about head lice, treatment options, and return-to-school guidelines for your student.

After completing the first treatment for lice, your child can return to school. Please check in with the front office at your school site when returning your student to school. They will confirm treatment was completed.

[CDPH: Got Lice? Here's What You Need to Know About Head Lice](#)

What are head lice?

- Head lice are small insects that live in people's hair and feed on their blood. Lice glue their eggs or "nits" to hair so that the nits do not get brushed off.
- Head lice die quickly (within two days) without feeding so they cannot live very long away from your child's head.
- Nits take six to nine days to hatch, and seven or more days for the lice to become egg-laying adults.

How do people get head lice?

- People get head lice from head-to-head contact with a person who has head lice. Head lice contact occurs most often during family gatherings, play dates, sleepovers, camps, or even when taking selfies.
- Children are more likely to get lice from family members and playmates than from classmates at school.

How do I know if my child has lice?

- If you or your child have head lice, you may see nits stuck to the hair near the scalp and lice crawling through the hair.
- Nits should not be confused with dirt or dandruff in the hair, which can be easily brushed away.
- A person with head lice may have a tickling feeling in their hair or an itchy scalp. Intense scratching may also occur.
- Children may be irritable and have difficulty sleeping since head lice are most active at night.

[CDPH: Head lice and nits have been found in my hair or my child's hair. Now what?](#)

If your child has head lice, the best way to get rid of the lice is to comb their hair every day with a nit comb for **two weeks**. Use a metal (not plastic) nit comb with long teeth – several brands are available at your local pharmacy.

- [CDPH: A How-To Guide for Nit Combing](#)
- It's important to check the hair of everyone in your household to see if they have head lice. You can use over-the-counter products or medications a doctor prescribes to treat head lice. However, not all products effectively kill nits, and it's common to need retreatment 7-10 days after the first treatment when nits hatch.



Treatments:

Permethrin or pyrethrin products are the most active ingredients in most over-the-counter products. The best active ingredient is permethrin (found in Nix cream rinse).

- For more information about treatment options, see [Guidance on Head Lice Prevention and Control for School Districts and Child Care Facilities](#)

There is no proof the following products work:

- Vinegar
- Compounds that say they dissolve the glue on the nits “to ease their removal.”
- Mayonnaise
- Olive oil
- Tea tree oil
- Lotions that “suffocate” lice

Here are a few other things you can do to get rid of the lice or nits in your home:

- Wash clothing, bedding, and other items used by the person with head lice in the 2 days before treatment in hot water (>130°F), then dry on the hottest heat cycle.
- Place combs, brushes, hair bands, and hair clips in hot water (>130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Vacuum carpets and furniture in areas where the person sat or laid down.

For additional information on head lice, please refer to the following websites:

- CDPH: [Head Lice: What You Need to Know](#)
- CDC: [Head Lice](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics: Head Lice](#)