

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CHART

Lice (Head Lice, Pediculosis)

Incubation: 4-6 weeks that first time a person is infested; 7-12 days for subsequent infestations.

Symptoms: Itching and irritation of the scalp - can feel something moving in the hair - sores on the head caused by scratching. White to yellow-brown nits (eggs) attached very firmly to the hair, most commonly at the nape of the neck, crown of the head and above the ears.

Method of transmission: Direct, head-to-head contact with an infested person - indirect contact with combs, brushes, hats, other headgear, clothing or bedding of an infested person.

Communicable period: As long as live lice are present.

Exclusion: A person with head lice shall be excluded from school or child care center until after the first treatment with an effective pediculicide.

Control Treat the infested person with a medication (pediculicide) that kills lice and nits; for children under 2 years of age, contact a physician for directions before treatment. Check the entire household and all close contacts for lice; treat all contacts to whom lice have spread. Machine wash in the hot water cycle all washable clothing, towels, bed linens and other items that the infested person touched during the 2 days before treatment, and dry on the hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Dry clean clothing that is not washable OR store items that cannot be washed in a closed container/bag for 14 days. Soak combs and brushes for 1 hour in rubbing alcohol or wash with soap and soak in hot (130F) water for 1 hour. Small items can also be placed in a freezer overnight. Vacuum the floor and furniture. Do not use fumigant sprays. Encourage parents to inspect children's heads regularly. The life cycle of lice is composed of 3 stages; eggs, nymphs and adults. Under ideal conditions, the eggs hatch in 7-10 days. They nymph stage lasts about 7-13 days. The egg-to-egg cycle averages about 3 weeks. The hands of those who examine people for head lice have never been found to transmit them between people. Lice do not jump, fly or swim; they cannot survive off a person for longer than 24-48 hours. Eggs can survive 7-10 days off a person but will not hatch below 72 degrees Fahrenheit. The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) may have different guidelines/rules for exclusion from sports activities. See: <http://ohsaa.org/medicine/sportssafety.htm>

Reporting: Report an outbreak, unusual incident or epidemic to the local health department by the end of the next business day.

JFS 08087 (Rev. 12/2016)

SB/th 5/2017