

Head lice (Pediculosis capitis)

This is an insect parasite which lives on the human head and feeds on blood. It is dependent on the human host for all nourishment but can survive off the host for up to 2 days.

Symptoms: Itching, small sores from bites, and visible lice and nits (eggs) attached to the hair shafts.

Transmission: Primarily by head to head contact but may also be by sharing of towels, bedlinen, pillows, hats, brushes etc. Human lice do not live on pets. They cannot jump. Use of lice capes for coats is ineffective in controlling the spread of lice. Lice do not prefer clean hair.

Treatment: Use of a medicated treatment shampoo available from a pharmacy. It is important to repeat the treatment 7 days after the 1st in order to treat any recently hatched nymphs. Failure to do this can cause cyclical reinfection and resistance to the particular ingredient in the shampoo. After the shampoo has been rinsed off a nit comb should be used to remove any visible nits. This whole process repeated in 7days. The child's hats, scarves, coat, all bedding and soft toys in regular use at the time of the infestation should be washed in hot water. Duvet inners and pillows should be put out in the sun☺. Mattress should be well vacuumed.

