

HOW TO DETECT HEAD LICE

Adult lice are the size of a sesame seed, have six legs and are tan to grayish-white in color. Nymphs look like adult lice but are smaller. The nits (lice eggs) are very small, yellow or white in color and stick to the shaft of the hair close to the scalp.

Infestations are diagnosed by finding adults, nymphs or viable eggs on the head. Check all members of the household and treat only for active infestations.

To detect lice you will need the following:

Magnifying glass	Well lit room
Towel	Nit comb and regular comb
Hair clips	Tissue or paper towel
Plastic bag	Old toothbrush
Soap	Hot water

Procedure:

1. Check for lice in a well lit room.
2. Wash the hair well, towel dry. Place towel on the shoulders.
3. Comb the hair with a regular comb.
4. Use a nit comb to comb the top of the head to the ends of the hair with the teeth of the comb touching the scalp. Search the entire head, the most common areas where nits are found are around the ears and nape of the neck.
5. After each stroke, check the teeth of the comb carefully for lice or nits then wipe comb with a tissue and discard in garbage bag. Use a magnifying glass as nits are tiny.
6. Use hair clips to pin up hair once an area has been combed five times.
7. A complete combing of a head will take 15-20 minutes.

If live lice, nymphs or viable nits are found then treatment will be required. Then continue with steps 8-11

8. Tie up garbage bag and discard.
9. Follow package directions carefully for treatment.
10. Clean teeth of comb with old toothbrush then wash comb, toothbrush and hair clips in soapy hot water 20 minutes.
11. Machine wash clothing, towels and bedding in hot water and dry on hot air cycle in dryer. Vacuum floor and furniture.

Sources, GNB Head Lice fact sheet and Canadian Pediatric Society Head Lice Handout for Parents.