



Head Lice

[Head lice](#) are a parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people. Head lice are not known to spread disease but are known to feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp.

In the United States, infestation with head lice is most common among pre-school children attending child care, elementary schoolchildren, and the household members of infested children.

Head lice move by crawling (they cannot hop or fly) and are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Anyone who comes in head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice is at greatest risk. Spread by contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an infested person can occur, but is uncommon.

[Treatment for head lice](#) is recommended for persons diagnosed with an active infestation. All household members and other close contacts should be checked and treated if needed. Many head lice medications are available "Over-the-counter" without a prescription at a local drug store or pharmacy. If crawling lice are still seen after a full course of treatment contact your health care provider.

To prevent and control the spread of head lice, avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities and do not share clothing, combs, brushes, or towels with others and disinfect brushes, bedding and other personal items used by an infested person.

