

# THE FACTS OF LICE

## **What's a louse?**

Head lice are tiny, crawling insects that live on human hair and scalp, including the base of the neck and behind the ears. They live by feeding on human blood.

Adult parasites are brownish-gray and are so small they are difficult to see. It is easier to see their little round, white eggs, called "nits."

## **Itching is a warning signal.**

The major sign of head lice is intense itching and irritation. There may be red marks on the skin—the result of irritation due to the bites of the lice. To be sure, look closely for nits.

## **What are the nits?**

The female louse attaches the nits near the base of individual hairs, especially on hairs behind the ears and on the back of the neck. One female can produce dozens of nits if she isn't killed. The eggs hatch in about a week, and the young lice start feeding immediately. They pierce the skin to suck blood and in about 10 days begin to produce more nits.

## **How are lice spread?**

Head lice are usually spread from one person to another by physical contact or by shared personal articles, such as combs, hairbrushes, scarves, wigs, or hair-ribbons.

Because children commonly share such personal articles, head lice are frequently found on children and their family members. This year millions of American children will have head lice at some time. If you find head lice on your children, tell their teachers and school officials so the spread of lice can be stopped.

## **How do you get rid of lice?**

In order to rid your child's hair of lice, we recommend treatment with NIX. Use the following steps for application of NIX:

1. Apply NIX – must remain on hair 10 minutes.
2. Wash out NIX with a rinse of equal parts water and white vinegar.
3. Comb out the nits.

## **Once the lice are gone, you should:**

- Wash all clothing, bedding, towels, jackets, hats, etc. in hot water
- Items that cannot be machine washed should be stored in a plastic bag for 2 weeks (This includes stuffed animals/toys)
- Boil hairbrushes and combs.
- Vacuum all mattresses and flooring