## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Lice are not dangerous but they are contagious. Your child must be treated promptly and safely to avoid spreading lice to other friends, family members, and classmates. Head lice are a school ritual most parents would be happy to avoid. Like other conditions, lice are spread person-to-person, but in this case, it’s more about head-to-head contact. Lice can’t jump or fly, but when children’s heads touch one another, which can occur in schools as kids gather in and out of the classroom, lice can easily spread. Teach children to avoid head-to-head contact and share clothes that have contact with hair. Also, shorter hair or hair tied back can reduce the risk of lice spreading.

\*\*Handwashing won’t help you here, as lice are not germs and have nothing to do with hygiene.\*\*

These tiny insects are parasites that feed on human blood, and they can be very difficult to get rid of once they’ve taken up residence on your scalp.  Here’s everything you need to know about who is most likely to get head lice – and how to avoid getting lice if you are exposed. If you’re wondering how to avoid getting lice, there are fortunately several precautions you can take right away. Here are some tips:

**Avoid head-to-head contact –**Avoiding direct head-to-head contact can significantly reduce your chances of getting head lice if exposed. This means avoiding hugs, leaning your head on someone else’s, and sleeping in close proximity to someone else.

**Don’t share personal items –**Head lice can also occasionally be transmitted through shared personal items like brushes, combs, hair accessories, hats, and helmets. It’s important to avoid sharing these items with others, especially if they have had head lice recently. If you do need to share, make sure to disinfect the item first or pop in the freezer in a sandwich bag overnight.

**Keep long hair tied up –**Long hair can increase the risk of getting head lice, as it can come into contact with other people’s hair more easily. Keeping long hair tied up in a bun or ponytail can reduce the chances of contact with other people’s hair. French plaits and clips / hairbands are also useful if child has a fringe.

**Regularly check for lice and nits –**Checking your hair and scalp regularly for lice and nits can help catch an infestation early and prevent it from spreading. Use a fine-toothed comb to carefully inspect your hair, especially around the ears and neck. If you do find lice or nits, treat immediately.

**Use preventative products –**There are several preventative products available, such as shampoos and sprays, that can help repel lice. These products contain natural ingredients like tea tree oil or neem oil, which are believed to be effective in preventing lice infestations. Using these products regularly can help keep lice at bay and even reduce your chances of getting lice if exposed.

**Make sure everyone in the family understands how lice work –**It’s important to educate yourself and your children about head lice, how they can be spread, and how to avoid getting lice from a family member. Teach your children to avoid head-to-head contact, not to share personal items, and to be aware of the signs of head lice.

**1) Itching:** One of the most common signs of lice is itching, especially on the scalp, neck, and ears. The bites of these tiny insects can cause a persistent and intense itching sensation, and scratching can make the problem worse. It’s important to note that not everyone who has lice experiences itching, so the absence of itching doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re in the clear.

**2) Visible bugs or nits:** Lice are very small and difficult to see, but with careful inspection, you may be able to spot them or their eggs (also called nits) on your scalp or hair. Nits are usually yellow or white in color and are attached to the hair shaft near the scalp. Adult lice are brown or gray and about the size of a sesame seed. If they are approx. a baby finger from the scalp, they are most likely non-viable eggs meaning they will not hatch and with combing will come out of the hair eventually.

**3) Red bumps or sores:** If you scratch your head a lot because of lice, you may develop red bumps or sores on your scalp. These can become infected if you continue to scratch them, so it’s important to try to resist the urge to scratch as much as possible.

**4) Difficulty sleeping or concentrating:** Lice stay active at night, which means that they can make it difficult for you to sleep. If you or your child are having trouble falling asleep or your child is having difficulty concentrating at school, head lice may be to blame so make sure to check. Poor concentration can also be caused by lice.

**5) Feeling like something is moving in your hair:** If you feel like something is moving in your hair, even though you can’t see anything, it’s possible that you have lice. These insects move quickly and can be difficult to spot, so the sensation of movement may be your only clue that something is amiss.

**It’s important to note that it could be up to six weeks before you really start to see signs of an infestation, and your head may not start to itch until then. More often than not, by the time you start having symptoms, there’s a chance they’ve actually be there for a while.**

Once you are lice-free, you can apply products containing essential oils like tea tree oil or lavender oil directly on the scalp and hair in order to prevent a future outbreak. These oils have been found to be effective in repelling head lice, but they must be applied regularly for best results.

**Best way to check:**

After the hair is washed and is wet, split it into several partings, use your fine tooth comb and comb quickly through each section. You may remove eggs (nits) or walkers (lice). If this is the case then dry the hair and follow this treatment procedure.

Get 60ml of Olive oil and apply to the scalp and comb it through the hair. Leave the hair for 30 minutes then as above split the hair into sections and comb quickly. Combing slowly allows the lice to escape into another section so you need to be quick with the combing. Wipe into white kitchen paper and you will see the debris. Once you are happy with this, wash the hair with wash up liquid then regular shampoo. Put the combs, bobbins etc into a sandwich bag and into the freezer. You can pop teddies and throws from the bed into a black bag for 2 weeks. Repeat the above treatment 5-7 days – every day is not necessary.

Spray daily with the lice preventative spray containing Tea Tree essential oil. Note the spray will not destroy the lice but it does prevent them travelling from one head to another as they simply do not like Essentials oils. Spray behind the ears, nape of the neck and under the fringe.