

Head Lice Advice

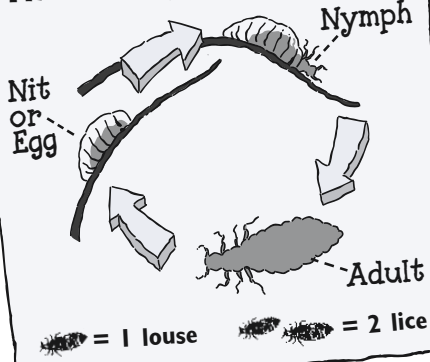
Kids can help prevent the spread of head lice by learning some basic facts about these parasitic pests! Share the information below with the children as you do the activities described on page 18.

Background Information

Who gets lice? Anybody can get head lice. Having head lice doesn't mean that you're dirty. It just means that you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Lice cannot fly or jump from person to person, but they can be passed by sharing combs, hats, helmets, headphones, or bedding.

What are lice? Head lice are small insects that live in human hair and feed on human blood. They begin their lives as eggs called *nits*. After about a week, the nits hatch into *nymphs*. Nymphs can only do two things: eat and shed their skins. Once a nymph sheds its skin three times (about seven days after hatching) it becomes an *adult* louse. An adult louse is the size of a sesame seed. Like all other insects, it has six legs. (A reproducible copy of the life cycle is on page 31.)

The Life Cycle of a Louse



Head lice are annoying, but not dangerous. They do not carry diseases.



How can you tell if you have head lice? If your head itches, especially at the nape of your neck or behind your ears, it may mean that you have lice. Not everyone itches when they have lice, so if there is an outbreak of lice in a school, it's important that everyone gets checked. The school nurse will look for lice and nits on the scalp and near the hair roots.

How do you get rid of head lice? One way is to comb out the lice using a lice comb. Other methods include using medicated shampoo. Ask your school nurse or doctor to recommend a treatment. An important part of getting rid of head lice is to work together with all the families in your school, so that kids do not re-infect each other.

How do you get rid of lice around the house or classroom? Vacuum the furniture and floors. Soak combs and brushes in hot water or alcohol for 10 minutes. Wash clothes and sheets in hot water, then run through a dryer at high temperature for at least 20 minutes. Stuffed animals and blankets can be sealed in plastic bags for two weeks. That allows plenty of time for any nits to hatch and die.

For more information about lice go to the following Web site: National Pediculosis Association at www.headlice.org

The Lousy Week

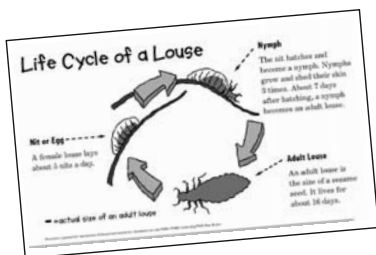
An army of lice has descended on Lakewood Elementary School. Who will win the battle? The students and teachers, or the head lice? *The Lousy Week* is one of three shows on the home video *Arthur Goes to the Doctor*.



Activities

What I know about head lice. Draw a chart with three columns: *Know*, *Want to Know*, and *Learned*. Brainstorm and write down what kids already know (or think they know) about lice. Watch the video *The Lousy Week*. Afterward, help kids generate questions about head lice. Write the questions in the second column. Read a few books about lice together (see Read All about It), and/or share some of the Background Information (page 17) with the kids. Write the answers to the questions and any other facts kids learned in the third column.

All in the family. Copy and distribute the reproducible Life Cycle of a Louse chart (page 31). If kids have studied the life cycles of other insects, such as butterflies or ants, talk about how the life cycle of a louse is similar. Can children name some other insects that live on blood? Can they name other insects that do not fly? What is one thing that all insects have in common? (They all have six legs.)



Lice advice. Have kids create a book with facts about head lice and how to get rid of them. Make copies to share with other classes and send home to families.

Trivia game. Have kids write questions and answers about head lice on index cards. Encourage them to use *The Lousy Week* video, the Life Cycle of a Louse reproducible, the class chart, books, and Web site (see page 17) as sources of information. Divide the class into teams. Use the questions and answer cards to hold a quiz show.



Family activities. Send home copies of the coloring sheet Muffy and the Lice and Head Lice Control: Tips for Parents. English and Spanish language versions are available on pages 19–20. Visit the ARTHUR Web site at pbskids.org/arthur/grownups for versions in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.

Read All about It



Lots of Lice by Bobbi Katz

Mom, Teacher Says I Have Headlights by Steve Erwin

Those Itsy-Bitsy Teeny-Tiny Not-So-Nice Head Lice by Judith Rice. (This book has text in both Spanish and English.)

Head Lice by Allison Lassieur

Lice by Patrick Merrick

Head lice have been around as long as humans. Scientists have even found evidence of head lice on prehistoric mummies!

