

**Head Lice Information from the CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/fags.html>
The following information can be generalized to schools. D. Goodman RN**

Head lice move by crawling; they cannot hop or fly. Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Anyone who comes in head-to-head contact with someone who already 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 is uncommon. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Diagnosis

Close examination of the hair and scalp is necessary to determine head lice infestation. Misdiagnosis of head lice infestation is common. The diagnosis of head lice infestation is best made by finding a live nymph or adult louse on the scalp or hair of a person.

Do head lice spread disease?

Head lice should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Head lice are not known to spread disease.

Can head lice be spread by sharing sports helmets or headphones?

Head lice are spread most commonly by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Spread by contact with inanimate objects and personal belongings may occur but is very uncommon. Head lice feet are specially adapted for holding onto human hair. Head lice would have difficulty attaching firmly to smooth or slippery surfaces like plastic, metal, polished synthetic leathers, and other similar materials.

Can wigs or hair pieces spread lice?

Head lice and their eggs (nits) soon perish if separated from their human host. Adult head lice can live only a day or so off the human head without blood for feeding. Nymphs (young head lice) can live only for several hours without feeding on a human. Nits (head lice eggs) generally die within a week away from their human host and cannot hatch at a temperature lower than that close to the human scalp. For these reasons, the risk of transmission of head lice from a wig or other hairpiece is extremely small, particularly if the wig or hairpiece has not been worn within the preceding 48 hours by someone who is actively infested with live head lice.

Can swimming spread lice?

Data show that head lice can survive under water for several hours but are unlikely to be spread by the water in a swimming pool. Head lice have been seen to hold tightly to human hair and not let go when submerged under water. Chlorine levels found in pool water do not kill head lice.

Should household sprays be used to kill adult lice?

No. Using fumigant sprays or fogs is NOT recommended. Fumigant sprays and fogs can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin and they are not necessary to control head lice.

Do I need to have my home fumigated?

No. Use of insecticide sprays or fogs is NOT recommended. Fumigant spray and fogs can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin and they are not necessary to control head lice.

Routine house cleaning, including vacuuming of carpeting, rugs, furniture, car seats, and other fabric covered items, as well as laundering of linens and clothing worn or used by the infested person is sufficient.

Should I have a pest control company spray my house?

No. Use of insecticide sprays or fogs is NOT recommended. Fumigant spray and fogs can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin and they are not necessary to control head lice.

Routine vacuuming floors and furniture is sufficient to remove lice or nits that may have fallen off the head of an infested person.