



# Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Head lice are parasites that are generally found on the head, eyebrows or eyelashes of individuals.

Signs can include:

- Small red bumps from scratching
- Lice eggs (nits)—yellow, tan, or brown dots near the scalp
- Adult lice and nymphs—size of a sesame seed, grayish-white or tan

Incubation Period	Head lice can survive off the body for 1-2 days, allowing for re-infestation.
Contagious Period	Lice are contagious (but don't spread disease) and can be hard to get rid of if the correct steps are not taken.

## Recommended Actions

Refer the child for treatment at the end of the school day and AVOID situations with close head-to-head contact and sharing of clothing, linens, pillows, hats, helmets, and barrettes.

### Cases:

Exclude cases until treated with a pediculicide

### Contacts:

None

Please see [Arizona Administrative Code R9-6-355](#)

\*If you have questions please call public health for assistance and recommendations.\*

## Transmission

Head lice are spread by direct head-to-head contact between people, or indirectly through shared items including combs, brushes, head phones, hats, towels, coats, or sleeping mats.

Carpeted or upholstered items and stuffed animals can harbor head lice.

## Prevention

There are many over the counter products for the treatment of lice. Contact a health care provider for guidance, specifically if live lice are present after two treatments.

Wash recently used clothing, bedding, towels, combs, and brushes with soap and hot water (at least 130° F) for 10 minutes or dry clean

Place items that cannot be cleaned (stuffed animals for example) in a sealed plastic bag for 10-14 days.

## Additional Information:

Lice can be seen by the naked eye.

As long as live lice are present on the head or in the environment, people can be exposed.

Household pets are not a source of head lice.

If a child has lice for the first time, it may take 4-6 weeks for itching to start. If a child in the school is suspected to have lice, inform the parent so they can treat their child.

## Resources

- [ADHS Head Lice \(Pediculosis\) Fact Sheet](#)
- [CDC Head Lice \(Pediculosis\)](#)
- [CDC Head Lice School Information](#)