

Head lice: Learn how to avoid the spread

One of the most common things kids pass on to one another is head lice. No larger than a sesame seed, lice have annoyed people for a long time. Though they are icky, the good news is that head lice don't spread disease. Also, your pet dog and cat can't catch the lice that lives on humans. You can keep the pesky critters away using simple methods.



Photo above by Jovanmandic, below by Bilanol, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on head lice:

1 Head lice need a human host to stay alive. They live on the scalp and hair and feed on human blood. Children are often hosts and can spread lice to their parents and playmates.



2 Safe, over-the-counter medications usually work, though not all the time. A doctor can prescribe stronger medicines if needed.

3 If you or your child has head lice, be honest and open about it with anyone who comes in contact with your family. That will keep people safe and help ensure there won't be further spread of the critters.

4 Basic housekeeping measures can keep head lice from coming back. Machine washing all bed linens, towels and clothes used over the past two days at the hottest setting is helpful.

5 Be leery of home remedies, such as slathering mayonnaise or pickle juice on hair. Opt for shampoos and treatments approved by U.S. health officials.



>> For more tips, visit www.cdc.gov/lice