

HOW TO CHECK A HEAD FOR LICE

ASK AND LOOK for signs of itching, like scratching the head. If a spot on the head is itching, be sure to check that spot for lice and nits.

CHECK the back of the neck for signs of redness and scratches. Not everyone with head lice will have itching. If you do not see lice or nits in these areas, part the hair into sections and keep looking.

SEARCH until the whole head has been checked. Start at the top. Section off small amounts of hair. Clip the section that has been checked with a hair clip or bobby pin. Keep checking the head until all of the hair has been checked or until you see a louse or nit.

IF you see lice or nits, remove them and decide what kind of treatment to use. If no louse is found, but nits are found and no treatment has been done in the past seven days, a treatment may be applied and the nit(s) removed. If live lice and/or nits have been found and treated in the past seven days with a pediculicide, remove lice and/or nits and repeat treatment no sooner than seven days from last treatment.

EACH person in the household should be checked. Lice are more common in children between five and twelve. Lice can and do live on infants, adolescents, middle-agers and older persons.

HOW TO CHECK A HEAD FOR NITS

Female lice lay eggs which they attach individually to a hair shaft. The egg is inside of a case called a nit. Nits are most often attached near the scalp to a single hair shaft. Nits are best described as opal or whitish in color; the center darkens as the louse matures. The louse matures in seven to ten days, leaving the nit or case still firmly attached to the hair shaft, now appearing transparent. Nits are easier to see in dark hair, and are a challenge to see in gold-tone or mixed hair color.

CHECK the hair at the bottom of the head near the top of the neck and around the ears. Natural light or indoor lighting with at least a 60 watt bulb is recommended. A magnifying glass may be helpful.

Nits are more likely to be seen in the hair than lice, although both are visible to the unaided eye for persons with normal vision. Nits may be found anywhere on a hair shaft. Those found on the end of the hair shaft farthest from the scalp are most likely to be empty cases.

Nits are present only when lice have also been present. Only lice deposit nits on a hair shaft; no other insect puts nits on human hair.