

What are head lice? The head louse, or *Pediculus humanus capitis*, is a parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people. Head lice feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp. Head lice are not known to spread disease.

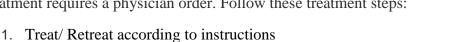
Head lice move by crawling - they cannot hop or fly.

- Head lice are spread by DIRECT Contact with the hair of an infested person.
- Anyone who comes into DIRECT head-to-head contact with someone who already has Head Lice is at greatest risk.
- The Head Lice do not fly or jump to another person. DIRECT contact is necessary for transmission.
- Lice is spread by DIRECT contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) and personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an infested person.
- Head lice and nits are found on the scalp, typically around the ears and neckline

Head lice survive less than 1–2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the human scalp

How do we treat head lice in the hospital?

Treatment requires a physician order. Follow these treatment steps:



- 2. Have the infested person put on a clean gown and change linen after treatment.
- 3. The nits (head lice eggs) must be combed out.
- 4. Nit (head lice egg) combs should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft.
- 5. After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice once per day or more often may decrease the chance of self-reinfestation.

*To obtain a comb without treatment, enter a Material Services ticket on MCSS ServiceNow PMM 229577

Additional measures:

- Bag clothing and send home or maintain in bags for 2 weeks.
- Visitors and family members who are symptomatic should refrain from visiting until assessment and/or 24 hours after initial treatment

How do I protect myself?

- 1. Place the patient in **Contact Isolation** until 24 hours after initial treatment.
- 2. A gown and gloves are required.
- 3. NOTE-No additional PPE required than gown and gloves. No added caps, booties or cover suites needed.
- 4. Standard room cleaning after treatment.
- 5. Patient does not need to be moved to another room.



Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Prevention Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention