

Lice

Lice are tiny insects about an eighth of an inch long that live on the human head. Color may vary from light to dark tan. They crawl from hair to hair and feed on human blood from scalp bites, but they do not jump or fly.

What are signs and symptoms of lice?

- Tickling feeling in hair
- Itchy head
- Lice eggs are smaller than sesame seeds and are called nits.
- Nits are tightly attached to hair shafts.
- Nits hatch after eight or nine days.

How is it spread?

- Head-to-head contact is the most common way of spreading lice.
- Sharing items like combs, brushes, towels, bedding, hats, coats, scarves, hair accessories
- Placing head on furniture, rugs, pillows, or car seats recently used by someone with lice
- Person is contagious until lice and nits are destroyed

How is it treated?

- Prescription or over-the-counter head lice products

How can head lice be prevented?

- Do not share combs, brushes, towels, bedding, hats, coats, scarves, hair accessories
- Do not put on other people's hats
- Hang coats separately and place hats and scarves inside coat or jacket sleeve
- Clean or disinfect shared headgear with Lysol or rubbing alcohol before it is used by others
- Regularly check your child's head for lice
- Avoid head-to-head contact at school and while playing at home with infected people
- Do not lie on bedding, pillows, carpets or upholstered furniture that has been used by someone with lice

Should the sick individual be isolated?

- No

Should facilities do special cleaning?

- Special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended.

For more information, call the Genesee County Health Department at (810) 257-1017.