

HOME

Less-Toxic Pest Control Methods  
for Your Home & Garden

# HEAD LICE

Head Lice  
(2 adults)



## INSECT TIDBITS

Human lice only survive on humans. They cannot survive on a dog, cat, mouse, or bird.

Lice cannot jump, fly, or hop. They are limited to crawling. They are transferred from one human to another when people share combs, brushes, hats, headgear, bedding, towels, and scarves, and through other personal contact.

Adult lice will run from the heat of blow dryers.

## PREVENTION

- **Educate yourself and your children** about the ways lice are passed around. Lice need to be transported on materials that touch the head; they can also move from head to head if touching. Shared lockers at school can be a source of contamination; so can keeping sweaters or backpacks in a group place.

## CONTROLS

- **You must get rid of all the eggs (nits).**
- **Do not treat a child who is not infected.** If a letter comes home from school alerting you to an outbreak, begin frequent checks and shampooing for two weeks.
- **Shampoo** with a soap that has a coconut or olive oil base. Other oil-based shampoos will do. These will kill adult and larvae. Repeat 4 times weekly.
- **Use a special head-lice comb** found in pharmacies.
- **Wash bedding.**
- **Watch for reinfestation.** If these treatments are not working, it is most likely from reinfestation. Re-treat and educate on how lice are contracted. The most toxic material on the market kills only 85% of the population in 14 days. All treatments need several repetitions.
- **Look for non-toxic labels.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the Central Coast Environmental Health Project (CCEHP) at (805) 963-1622 ext. 111, or the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner at (805) 681-5600. Information compiled by the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO) and the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's office on behalf of the CCEHP.