



## HEAD LICE GUIDE



for **SCHOOLS, CAMPS** and  
**SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES**

**FL: 561-842-9969**

**TN: 615-227-3919**

**LICE SOLUTIONS**  
**RESOURCE NETWORK**

*A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit  
Head Lice Education & Control Center*



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**LiceSolutions.org**

6758 N. Military Trl., #110, West Palm Beach, FL 33407  
P: 561-842-9969 ▪ F: 561-842-0311

1187 Vultee Blvd., #105, Nashville, TN 37217  
P: 615-227-3919 ▪ F: 615-227-3920



## ABOUT US

Established in 1989, Lice Solutions Resource Network is an acknowledged leader in the head lice industry and the only nonprofit head lice education and control center in the world.

Executive Director Katie Shepherd has worked with other top lice experts namely: John Clark, Professor of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, University of Massachusetts; Dr. Shirley Gordon, Florida Atlantic University Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing; Terri L. Meinking, President, Global Health Associates of Miami, Inc. (2002-03 Research Associate Professor, 1994-2002 Research Assistant Professor, Field Epidemiology Survey Team, Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery, University of Miami School of Medicine); and Dr. David L. Reed, University of Florida, Museum of Natural History. She is the originator of **The Shepherd Method™** of Strand-by-Strand Nit and Lice Removal – combing out lice and nits through a methodical approach that ensures all evidence has been removed, and using only safe, non-toxic products.

Ms. Shepherd is the author of the book [Lice Advice](#), as well as upcoming books [Head Lice 101](#) and [Cambodia](#).

Currently, more than 250 individuals have become certified in **The Shepherd Method™**, opening for-profit (non-franchise) lice removal business in the U.S. Europe, Canada, and Mexico. Certification training is offered throughout the year in Florida and Tennessee.

Lice Solutions is the parent company of LSRN Global Outreach, the Shepherd Institute for Lice Solutions, LSRN Families, and LSRN Research. LSRN Global Outreach has provided free services to communities as far away as Cambodia. LSRN Families provides subsidized services to qualified families. The Shepherd Institute for Lice Solutions trains people to open their own for-profit lice removal businesses. LSRN Research has tested the effectiveness of most of the lice removal products available in the U.S. today.

## Rates

- Service is available on sliding scale for qualified low income families. Proper documentation is required.
- Research Study Programs provide additional opportunities for treatment.
- Treatment includes 2 re-checks within 2 weeks of initial visit; one Terminator™ lice comb for new paying client when one family is treated; and free head checks for family members.
- There is a \$25 one-time processing fee for first time clients.

**A variety of safe lice products are available for purchase**



## Head Checks

**Group Head Checks are available at \$1 per head -- minimum 100 heads**

**CALL**

**561-842-9969 (Florida)**

**615-227-3919 (Tennessee)**

**for more lice information or to schedule your screening**

## Achieving a Lice-Free School or Camp

### Four actions will help keep your school or camp lice-free:

1. **Develop a lice-free program.** Inform parents that you enforce a lice-free environment. Suggest that they have their children checked prior to the start of school or camp attendance and if necessary, treat.
2. **Check students or campers on arrival.** Identify and mandate the safe treatment of all children found with evidence of head lice.
3. **Follow-up with rechecks.** Don't assume that once treated you are past the problem. Incorporating follow-up re-checks ensures that no further evidence exists.
4. **Part ways lice-free:** A final check of students or campers at the completion of school or camp will not only ensure that they leave lice free, it also helps protect your school or camp's reputation.

## The "No Nit" Debate

One subject that continues to be a source of debate is the "No Nit" versus the "Live Bug Only" policies. Although it is highly possible to have nits and no bugs, more often than not those individuals found to have nits generally had some lice and/or nymphs as well.

The problem is that bugs are like chameleons; they blend with their environment. You could be looking right at a bug and not see it; they are just too easy to overlook. Even more difficult to see are the nymphs. Much emphasis is placed on the importance of removing all the nits, but very little is said about the nymphs. They risk that the nymphs could be missed is extremely high. Nits or nymphs alone don't pose an immediate risk, but they do grow very quickly into procreating adulthood.



## Do You Know?

- While head lice are not known to carry disease, secondary dangers include: infection, severe burns, allergic reaction, and even death.
- Head lice products are linked to autism and leukemia.
- Home treatments, if done improperly or carelessly, can kill.
- There is less than 2% chance of getting head lice from the environment.
- Some head lice prescriptions, such as **OVIDE**, can cause burning.
- There is no such thing as a "super louse". This is just a term for lice that have become genetically resistant to over-the-counter lice treatment products.
- Lice leave a scent that actually "calls" other lice, telling them that a person is a good food source.
- There is no "head lice season". While it is true that lice like warmer temperatures, the head provides the warmth lice need regardless of the season.
- Head lice can live in eye lashes, eye brows and beards.
- Head lice can cause lethargy or feeling "lousy".
- Head lice can be one of the signs of neglect.

## Lice Signs

- Rash at the nape of the neck
- Swollen glands
- Low-grade fever
- Bags under the eyes
- Daytime sleepiness
- Itching (only in approximately 50% of people)



## Mission

Lice Solutions Resource Network's mission is to educate people about safely treating and preventing head lice, as well as to treat them. We provide treatment to children and families at our West Palm Beach, FL and Nashville, TN offices. Treatment is provided to all families regardless of economic status. Families that cannot afford to pay for treatment frequently participate in lice product research studies and get treated by student lice techs as they learn. We rely on donations and the fees paid by our paying clients to provide free or greatly reduced fees for treatment.

## Partnership

**SCHOOLS, CAMPS AND COMMUNITIES can partner with Lice Solutions by scheduling head checks. 10% of each paid treatment from a referring school or camp goes to a FREE treatment for a student or person of their choice.**

*Actual sizes of 3 stages of nymphs and adult louse*



## Update for School and Camp Nurses

Many school and camp nurses feel they have seen and heard it all when it comes to head lice, and perhaps you have. While the “facts of lice” may be old school for many, newer research continues to be done, and with it comes updated information. The below list offers important facts to share with parents and staff:

- Head lice do not jump or fly, nor do they live on pets.
- Eggs (or nits, as they are commonly called) need the warmth of a human body to incubate. Once separated from the head, eggs must hatch within 24 hours. Thus only eggs on the head should cause concern.
- Because nits do not hatch off the head, bagging everything the child owns for three weeks waste time and wears the parent out during an already stressful situation.
- Sharing items like barrettes or pillows is not as big a concern as it once was, because lice do not willingly leave their food source – the head.
- Mega cleaning is not necessary. Exercise common sense cleaning that focuses on a 24 hour window.
- Head lice need human blood to survive and they only willingly leave their human host when they have another compatible source on which to live.
- Spread mainly through head-to-head contact, head lice favor the soft scalps and baby-fine hairs of children.
- More often found on girls than on boys, lice camouflage themselves, making removal an overwhelming task.
- Hairspray and gels do not prevent lice.

## SCHOOL POLICY DEFINITIONS

### No Nit

A “No Nit” policy requires that students be sent home from school as soon as nits are discovered. The American Association of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses advocate that the “No Nit” policies should be discontinued. These organizations recommend discontinuation because:

- Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are unlikely to be transferred to other people.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families, and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by non-medical personnel.

Many schools have discarded their “No Nit” policy because lice are not inherently dangerous and thus, in their opinion, do not warrant children missing school. Attendance is crucial to students’ earning higher grades and to schools receiving federal and state funding.

We recommend a modified “No Nit” policy, with children being sent home for treatment at the end of the day rather than immediately (unless lice are discovered school wide), as the best way to reduce attendance/embarrassment issues and to prevent the spreading of lice.

### No Live Lice

With a No Live Lice” policy, students found to have live head lice are excluded from school and not allowed to return until they are lice-free. Students are re-examined in 14 days to confirm that they have remained lice-free. Students with nits and no evidence of live head lice are not excluded from school.

According to the endorsers (American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and the National Association of School Nurses) of the “No Live-Lice” policy, studies have shown that school-wide screenings for nits are time consuming, costly, and ineffective. We disagree. School-wide screenings, if done by us, are efficient, inexpensive and effective. We believe that the “No Live Lice” policy is dangerous because active cases of lice will be missed as newly hatched lice are too small to be seen on a quick head check.

### Live and Let Live

A “Live and Let Live” policy does not send a child home from school for lice or nits. If a child has lice in her hair, the nurse contacts parents but sends the child back to the classroom for the rest of the day. Parents are expected to treat the lice, but no one enforces this expectation. No classes or groups are screened for bugs.

## Debunking Head Lice Myths

**Head lice fly and jump.**

**FALSE.** Head lice walk, run or crawl from hair to hair.

**It is easy to get lice.**

**FALSE.** Head lice are much harder to get than a cold, the flu, ear infections, pink eye, strep throat, or impetigo (which are air borne infections), because lice is spread by head-to-head contact rather than being air borne.

**Lice are dirty and spread disease.**

**FALSE.** Lice do not spread any known disease, nor are they impacted by dirt or lack of.

**You need to vacuum and wash everything, and put what you can in the dryer.**

**FALSE.** Just wash the items your child has used and vacuum the fabric areas (such as the carpet in his or her bedroom, a fabric couch or a car seat) on which your child has laid his or her head during the last 24 hours.

**You need to panic if your child has head lice.**

**FALSE.** Just exercise common sense.

**Head lice breed on dirty hair or if you have a dirty home.**

**FALSE.** Lice can breed on clean or dirty hair, in a clean or dirty home.

**My mother treated my head lice with gasoline so I can treat my child's head lice the same way.**

**FALSE.** In the past, people used to treat lice with kerosene. Now we know there are much better and safer methods available. However, some people remember their parents or grandparents treating head lice with gasoline, so they do what their parents did without realizing the harmful risks.

<b>All schools require students with lice to be sent home.</b>	<b>FALSE. Some schools do and some schools don't. This is a policy decision.</b>
<b>Only children get head lice.</b>	<b>FALSE. Adults and babies can get head lice, too.</b>
<b>You can get lice from your cat or dog.</b>	<b>FALSE. Head lice only live on humans.</b>
<b>Head lice can survive many days off of people on furniture, linens, or clothing.</b>	<b>FALSE. Head lice need a blood meal every 3-4 hours and the warmth of a human scalp to survive. When off the human body, they cannot survive for more than 24 hours.</b>
<b>Nits (lice eggs) can fall off a person's head, hatch and cause another person to get lice.</b>	<b>FALSE. Nits are glued to the hair shaft by a cement-like substance and are very hard to remove. When a nymph (baby louse) is hatched, it must feed within two hours.</b>
<b>Lice can't hold their breath.</b>	<b>TRUE. Head lice don't hold their breath, but they can shut down their bodies for approximately 2 hours (similar to hibernation). They have ventricles on the sides of their bodies that they can shut for this long.</b>
<b>You can get head lice from sitting in a desk next to someone who has lice.</b>	<b>MAYBE. Because head lice are spread by head-to-head contact, and lice do not fly or jump, just sitting next to a person with head lice will not necessarily cause you to get it. Whether you do depends on how close you are and if your hairs are touching.</b>
<b>Lice are not commonly spread through school or camp.</b>	<b>FALSE. It is common to get head lice from school,</b>

	camp, family members, playmates, and from anyone whom you may have close contact with.
Lice are commonly spread through hats or helmets.	FALSE. Spread of lice through hats or helmets is rare: less than a 2% chance.
You can always use mayonnaise, oil, vinegar, or conditioner to get rid of head lice.	FALSE. While these home remedies might work for some people, they do not work for all. In addition, these treatments would have to be repeated every 2-3 days for three weeks and have to be done along with combing. These methods also may be messy, smelly and uncomfortable. Mayonnaise could cause salmonella.
Head lice always prefer long hair.	FALSE. Head lice just like hair, although it is more likely that people with long hair may get lice.
Natural alternative products, or over-the-counter lice removal products, are always safe and 100% effective.	FALSE. Many products are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and others may contain ingredients that are not recommended for use on young children. No product is 100% effective.
Chlorine kills lice.	FALSE. Head lice are immune to almost every chemical, including chlorine. They are extremely hearty insects with a tough exoskeleton and they are impervious to chlorine. In addition, nothing penetrates the



	<p>shell of the nits so these lice eggs are also unaffected by chlorine.</p>
<p><b>You can get head lice by swimming in a pool with a person who has lice.</b></p>	<p><b>FALSE.</b> Lice do not swim and therefore will not spread that way. However, because head lice are passed from head to head, if someone is in close direct contact with another individual, even if the hair is wet in a pool, the bugs can crawl from one head to another.</p>
<p><b>You have to put every pillow, bedding, clothing, towels, and stuffed animal in your house in plastic bags for 2 weeks to smother lice.</b></p>	<p><b>FALSE.</b> Just wash or vacuum the items the person who has lice used within the last 24 hours. You can also put these items in the dryer for 30 minutes.</p>
<p><b>In time, inbreeding of lice on a person's head causes them to die spontaneously, that's why kids do not become covered with them. It is a self-limiting condition.</b></p>	<p><b>FALSE.</b> Lice can last until treated properly.</p>
<p><b>Super lice exist.</b></p>	<p><b>FALSE.</b> There is no such thing as a "super louse". This is just a catch-all phrase that means lice are becoming more resistant to certain treatments.</p>

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## USEFUL INFORMATION

**Having head lice is not a serious medical condition unless it is not taken care of properly.**

Over-the-counter lice treatment shampoo, such as Rid and Nix, can be more serious than head lice because they contain pesticides.

**Irrational reactions to head lice can lead to fumigating classrooms, schools, buses, etc. This is expensive and unnecessary.**

Much information about head lice is based on old, unproven information.

**Direct physical head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission.**

Transmission via clothing, hats, furniture, carpets, school bus seats, and other objects is not likely because lice die within 24 hours and start slowing down within 6 hours of leaving the head.

**Carpets and furniture are not a significant cause of head lice.**

There is no relationship between personal cleanliness and transmission.

**It is unlikely that a nit on a stray hair shaft will hatch because it needs the human head to incubate.**

Stray lice that fall off a head are probably either injured or dying and incapable of causing a new infestation.

**It is not possible to tell whether treatment has been successful by the appearance of the eggs.**

Although schools, camps, day care centers are often blamed for head lice outbreaks, it is the family unit that maintains cases leading to outbreaks in these institutions. That is why it is important to communicate to friends that your family has head lice – to stop the vicious cycle of giving and getting head lice. Have all family members checked and if necessary, treat. Remember, at one time or another, we may all have to deal with head lice. It is how we deal with it that separates us.

**Because it is possible, although unlikely, that a louse on a piece of hair that fell off a head will survive long enough to cause infestation, only light cleaning is necessary.**

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