

Common Myths and Facts About Head Lice

Myths	Facts
Head lice spread disease	Head lice do not spread disease. Although lice can be stressful, they don't make people sick.
Head lice only affect people with poor hygiene	Having head lice is not a sign of being "dirty" or living in an unclean environment. You can still get lice even if you have freshly washed hair.
Only children get head lice	Head lice are most common among school-aged children and their household members, but anyone can get lice.
Head lice can jump and fly	Head lice don't have wings so they can't jump or fly. Head lice crawl and spread through direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact with someone who has head lice.
You can get head lice from your pets	Animals cannot get or spread head lice to people.
The entire household should be treated if one person has head lice	If one person has head lice, the whole household should be checked for lice, but treatment products should only be used on a person who has head lice.
Head lice can be killed by using products containing vinegar, mayonnaise, olive oil, or tea tree oil	There is no proof that vinegar, mayonnaise, olive oil, tea tree oil, or other alternative products kill lice or nits. Over-the-counter products and products prescribed by a healthcare provider are available for the treatment of head lice.
Head lice spread at school	Head lice are more likely to spread at sleepovers, play dates, and family gatherings than at school.
Tying back or braiding the hair prevents head lice	Even if hair is tied back, head lice can still spread as long as heads are touching.
If someone has head lice, their home needs to be treated to kill lice	Treating or cleaning the home with chemicals to kill head lice is not necessary or recommended. Washing items or vacuuming certain areas may be helpful, but head lice will die in 1-2 days if removed from a person's head.