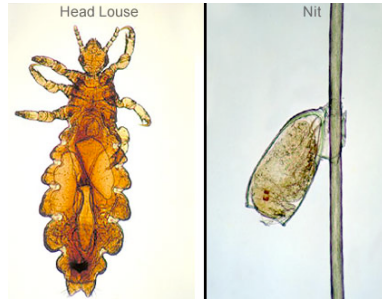


# LICE

It happened. You found out you have lice in your home (actually on you or a family member's head). It will be okay. Sit down, take a deep breath, you can do this and remain sane.



## What is a Louse?

A louse is a small grayish/clear bug formally known as pediculosis capitis. They live in hair and feed off of the blood of the owner of the hair! Nits are the eggs of lice and attach to the hair shaft.

## How do I get rid of it?

There are a few options. Traditionally, over the counter and prescription shampoos are used to kill the lice and a nit comb is used to remove any remaining nits. The shampoos are toxic and not without risk. Additionally, lice are becoming resistant to these because of overuse. Alternative shampoos and mousses are available that are "natural." These can also be effective but must be combined with use of a nit comb. Another option is to use a service. Some services come to your home to help with lice removal and there are some salons that provide this service. A quick check with google will help find the place most convenient for you. While pricey, it can be worth every penny!

So shampoos, whether natural or medicinal, will kill the lice. Then you need to deal with the nits. Basically, you can't kill nits. They need to be removed from the hair shaft or they will hatch and you will have lice again. Careful and repeated use of a metal nit comb will remove the nits.

## Step by Step

1. Use a shampoo product for lice removal according to directions.
2. Use a nit comb to go through the wet hair very carefully to remove nits. Clips can be handy in keeping hair sections separated. Go through the head slowly and carefully using just a small section at a time. Your conscientiousness will pay off.

**You may then send a child back to school.**

3. Step two should be repeated every other day (or may need to be done daily depending on lice load) for at least a week. During repeated use of nit comb any live lice will also be seen and removed. You may use a natural mousse or shampoo intermittently during this week. Don't freak when you get a few lice or nits in subsequent days, it is expected and this is why you do this step repeatedly.
4. Use a nit comb weekly thereafter. Best to find one louse or nit then a headful!!!!
5. Wear hair back at school. No hat, brush sharing....

## How do I get it out of the house?

You will need to do some basic cleaning, ok a little more than basic. But take a deep breath it won't be too bad. All washing should be done in hot water.

1. All bedding needs to be washed.
2. Pillows and stuffed animals can go in the dryer on high heat for 25-45 minutes.
3. Place hair accessories, brushes, combs in a plastic bag and put in freezer for 24-48 hours.
4. Stuffed animals can also be bagged up and kept away for 48 hours.
5. Vacuum the couch.
6. Vacuum the headrests in the car. Or, if leather, clean with household cleaner.
7. Clothing that is not laundered (sweaters) can be isolated for 48 hours.
8. Anything can be isolated for 48 hours. They will die without your blood and contrary to popular opinion don't live forever.
9. Nothing special needs to be done to the carpet. They do not burrow or survive in carpeting.

## How do I keep from getting it?

Once you have lice and they are feeding from your scalp you are prone to it. The lice inject a substance into your scalp so they may feed more easily. This substance attracts lice. After you have removed your lice your head is like a beacon for more lice. If you go back to the same environment (SCHOOL) where everyone may not yet be lice free you can easily get it again. Therefore, comb weekly and wear the hair back if able.

JTMG 2-2012

**CARING FAMILY, SC 815-459-2200**

Todd S Giese, MD, Racquel N Ramirez, MD, George B Gancayco, MD, Jamie TM Gancayco, MD & Lauren K Mielke, FNP Family Nurse Practitioner.  
Visit our website at: [www.mycaringfamily.com](http://www.mycaringfamily.com)