

**HEAD LICE**  
**(Pediculosis Capitis)**

**IMMUNIZATION:** None

**INCUBATION PERIOD:** "Nits" (eggs) hatch in a week and reproduce 8 to 10 days after hatching.

**SYMPTOMS:** Irritation and itching of the scalp. Presence of insects and eggs or "nits" in the hair, especially at the nape of the neck and about the ears. Lice may appear lighter on persons with fair hair and darker on persons with dark hair.

**PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY:** Communicable when live lice are present and moving, and/or viable nits are present on the child.

**MODE OF TRANSMISSION:** Direct head to head contact, e.g., crowded sleeping conditions; may also be spread by contact with infested headgear, towels, hairbrushes, combs, pillows, bedding, earphones, etc.

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:** Exclude until live lice and viable nits are eradicated. Children may return after being treated with a pediculicide and after delousing of personal articles. It is recommended that schools and day care centers have a "no nit" policy and exclude children until all nits have been removed.

**CONTACTS/FOLLOW-UP:** When head lice are found in a setting, all close contacts of the infested child should be examined for signs of itching, redness, nits and lice. All household and other intimate contacts should be examined. Concurrent treatment of the child and all of his or her infested contacts as well as treatment of clothing and disinfection of inanimate objects is necessary to eradicate the infestation.