

# Grandparents Corner

September 2011

## National Pediculosis Prevention Month/Head Lice Prevention

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A head louse isn't a sign of bad personal hygiene or an unclean environment. Lice, also called pediculosis capitis, are a very common problem, second only to the common cold among communicable diseases affecting schoolchildren. Young children, preschool through elementary age, are most prone to infestation, which often transfers to a child's family member. Females of all ages acquire head lice more often than males do.

You can usually be rid of lice by using nonprescription shampoo that is specifically formulated to kill lice; however, if a nonprescription shampoo doesn't kill the lice, your doctor can prescribe a stronger, prescription shampoo.

Common signs and symptoms of head lice may include:

- Intense Itching- *An allergic reaction to the saliva that lice inject during feeding may result in itchy red bumps on your scalp, neck and shoulders. If it is the first infestation, some do not experience itching.*
- Adult Lice on Scalp - *The most common spots to find adult lice are behind your ears and along the back of your neck. Lice are tiny, about the size of a strawberry seed, but they can be up to 1/8 inch (3 millimeters) in size.*
- Lice Eggs (Nits) on Hair Shafts - *Nits resemble tiny pussy willow buds. Nits can be mistaken for dandruff, but unlike dandruff, they can't be easily brushed out of hair.*

Head lice can't fly or jump, and they are not transmitted by pets. They spread by head-to-head contact or by contact with contaminated personal belongings or home furnishings.

### Causes

- Head-to-Head Contact - This is the most common and may occur as children or family members play or interact closely together.
- Sharing personal items
  - Caps, hats and scarves
  - Brushes and combs
  - Hair decorations, such as barrettes
  - Headphones
- Home furnishings
  - Towels
  - Clothing
  - Blankets
  - Pillows
  - Upholstered furniture

The best treatment for head lice is prevention. Through education, your child can become less likely to acquire lice if they know how to prevent it.

*With age or because of illness, personality changes can be intense and difficult for the person in your care, family members, and caregivers. There is no guarantee that the personality changes will go away. Read this month's issue and answer True or False to the questions below to test your knowledge.*

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1. Some medications can cause personality changes in some people.    T    F
2. "Silent" infections, especially bladder or urinary tract infections (UTIs) can affect emotions and personality, even when the person doesn't seem sick.    T    F
3. Memory issues are what we generally think of in dementia. However, frustration, becoming lost, or not being able to do or recognize familiar things can cause startling personality changes.    T    F
4. When handling an angry outburst, making light of the person helps.    T    F
5. When the person refuses to cooperate, first make sure he understands what you are asking.    T    F
6. Sometimes combative behavior is a symptom of a deeper issue.    T    F
7. Too many activities at once can provoke a reaction because the person feels overwhelmed.    T    F
8. In some cases, improving mood can make pain less intense.    T    F
9. A sudden change in personality may be a red flag for other problems.    T    F
10. Giving a person choices will not make him or her any more likely to cooperate.    T    F

**KEY:** 1. T 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F