



Grandparents Corner

September 2016

*National Pediculosis Prevention Month
(Head Lice)*

In the United States, infestation with head lice is most common among preschool and elementary school-age children and their household members. Head lice are not known to transmit disease; however, secondary bacterial infection of the skin resulting from scratching can occur with any lice infestation.

Risk Factors: Head lice are mainly spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. The most common way to get head lice is by head-to-head contact with a person who already has head lice. Such contact can be common among children during play at:

- School
- Home
- Elsewhere (examples: sports activities, playgrounds, camp and slumber parties)

Transmission may occur by:

- Wearing clothing, such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, or hair ribbons worn by an infested person;
- Using infested combs, brushes or towels; or
- Lying on a bed, couch, pillow, carpet, or stuffed animal that has recently been in contact with an infested person.

The following are steps that can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:

- Avoid head-to-head contact during play and other activities at home, school and elsewhere.
- Do not share clothing .
- Do not share combs, brushes or towels. Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the two days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay; however, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities are not necessary to avoid infestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.

Learn how to accurately identify and screen for head lice and their eggs. Informed parents/guardians who make screening a part of routine grooming can send their child to school free of lice, and strive to be the first to detect lice and eggs in your child's hair. This is the way to avoid the "your child has lice" phone call from the school. While important and helpful to be notified, it's uncomfortable for parents to hear that someone else noticed their child had lice before they did. More importantly, when parents are first to notice lice, they are able to remove them before sending their child to school and potentially infecting others. Remember to check yourself and all members of your family.

Source: CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov

People taking certain over-the-counter or prescription medications, and people with medical conditions that can be made worse by drinking, should never drink. Alcohol and drug misuse raises the risk of illness or death from numerous health problems, including liver disease, heart disease, and some types of cancer. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *When we are older, our bodies respond differently to alcohol and medications than when we were younger. T F*
2. *Over time, heavy drinking permanently damages the brain and central nervous system, as well as the liver, heart, kidneys and stomach. T F*
3. *Tolerance of alcohol such as the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to get “high” is a sign of alcoholism. T F*
4. *There is evidence that a single drink per day may give some health benefit to older adults. T F*
5. *The best treatment for alcoholic liver disease is to abstain from alcohol. T F*
6. *Always avoid alcohol when taking painkillers or sedatives. T F*
7. *Prescription medications prescribed by your doctor do not carry any risk of dependence or addiction. T F*
8. *It is important to understand drug label warnings and the dangers of drug interaction. T F*
9. *Medical problems can be hard to diagnose when a person has been drinking alcohol. T F*
10. *It takes more alcohol to affect older people. T F*

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