

# LICE FACTS

## DESCRIPTION:

Head lice are tiny insects (2-4 mm) that live on the scalp. They survive on human blood. When they feed, they make us itch! Their eggs are called 'nits'. Nits cling to strands of hair and are hard to remove. They are very small and white in colour.



A head louse

## LIFE CYCLE:

A female louse can lay up to 150 eggs in its lifetime. The eggs (nits) take one week to hatch. After another two weeks, the baby lice (nymphs) grow up and start to lay eggs. The total life span of a louse is 30 to 35 days. New lice will continue to hatch and reproduce until the hair is treated.

## CATCHING LICE:

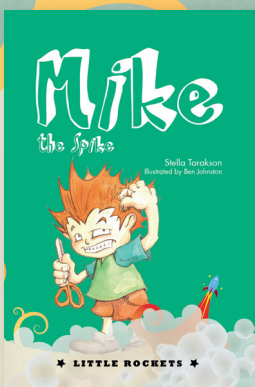
Lice are spread by direct contact - that is, heads must be touching or nearly touching. This can happen during playing, hugging, and school group activities. Lice may also spread by sharing hats, brushes and hair ties. Tying long hair in a bun or plait can help prevent the spread of lice.



Nit comb

## REMOVING LICE:

Nit shampoo needs to be applied and the instructions followed carefully. After shampooing, it is important to remove the lice and nits with a special comb. This needs to be repeated a week later, to make sure the life cycle is broken. When someone has lice, everyone in the family has to be treated.



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