

# How to Examine for Head Lice

## Use bright light to look at:

- ① Crown of head
- ② Bangs
- ③ Behind both ears
- ④ Nape of neck

## How to inspect

- ① Place gloves on your hands
- ② Use fingers to separate hair and create a part. The part should allow you to clearly see the person's scalp.
- ③ Look for lice crawling on the scalp where the hair is parted or on the hair shaft. The lice will be dark in color and the size of a poppyseed.
- ④ Look for nits near hair follicle about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from scalp. Nits (eggs) will be white or yellowish-brown. Nits are often more easily seen than lice, especially when the person has dark hair.
- ⑤ Also look behind both ears and near the back of the neck. You may see lice or nits. You may also see bites.

The size of a nit (egg), nymph, and louse relative to a penny



CDC photos

### A. Checking hair for lice



CDC photos

### B. Nits (lice eggs) on hair



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Chung EK, Boom JA, Datto GA, Matz PS (Eds). *Visual Diagnosis in Pediatrics*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2006. Courtesy of Hans B Kersten, MD. Copyright © 2006. In: UpToDate, Post, TW (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA, 2014.

**SCREENING TIP:** To distinguish between dandruff and nits, try to flick or pull off the white speck. Dandruff is easily pulled off, but nits are not.

Change gloves between each child's examination and wash your hands after all examinations are completed.



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