

Itchy and Scratchy

It's a challenge when reading about them not to **involuntarily** scratch: **nits** and **head lice**. Although nits and lice are quite **contagious**, they are not a **threat to health**. In fact the cleanest **scalps** may become **infested** with them.

Especially children in kindergarten and **primary school** are most likely to become infested with nits and lice. Families of such children, as well as people working with them are highest at risk. Lice can be transferred from person to person and maybe through the use of shared combs and hairbrushes. It is easy to differentiate between **fluff** and **dandruff** and nits and lice: fluff and other debris are easily removed by combing and brushing, nits and lice, on the other hand, feel as if they are cemented to the hair. It's best to go to the pharmacy for help...

Pharmacy customer: Hello, I was wondering if you could help me. Do you speak English?
PTA: Hallo. Yes, I do. What can I do for you?

I think he has nits!
 Oh! I see! What makes you think so?

Yesterday evening, he came to me and said: "Mom, my head is really itchy. Can you take a look?" And when I did, I just managed to catch a tiny insect on his scalp! After looking at it, I checked the internet. It was a louse.

Okay! So, first off: Do you have a lice-comb?

No, it's the first time that we have had such a problem. Right so here is a **small-tooth comb**. You will certainly need it for the **treatment** of lice and nits.

Don't you have some type of spray or lotion that you can recommend?

Yes, of course. We have this dimeticone-spray that you apply on the affected scalp and let it on for at least fifteen minutes before rinsing off and shampooing as normal.

Is there any chance of resistance, you know like with pesticides?

Not really. The dimeticone actually kills the insects and their eggs by physically coating them and then **suffocating** them, so there is no

chance for them to develop any type of resistance.

Good to know, but that sounds really poisonous! Is there any danger to humans?

Not if you use the spray as instructed. Make sure that the person being sprayed closes or covers their eyes, keeps their mouth closed, and doesn't **breathe in** during application.

I have two other children. Should I check them for lice as well?

Definitely! Even if they don't complain of having itchy scalps, there is a very strong possibility that they might have nits that just haven't **hatched**. And you will also, unfortunately, have to get someone to check your scalp too. Just to be sure.

Even the thought of it is making me itch!

Oh! I can understand that! I feel exactly the same! Before I forget: it might be a good idea to inform your son's class teacher about his little "friends" as you call them! After all, it is nothing to be ashamed of, as it usually has nothing to do with a **lack of hygiene**.

You have been really, really helpful. Thank you so much!

No problem! That's what we are here for. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
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VOCABULARY

itchy	juckend
scratchy	kratzig
involuntarily	unwillkürlich
nits	Nissen, Läuseeier
head lice	Kopfläuse
contagious	ansteckend
threat to health	gesundheitsgefährdend
scalps	Kopfhäute
infested	befallen
primary school	Grundschule
fluff	Fussel, Fluse
dandruff	Haarschuppen
small-tooth comb	Läusekamm
treatment	Behandlung
suffocating	ersticken
poisonous	giftig, toxisch
breathe in	einatmen
hatched	geschlüpft
lack of hygiene	Hygienemangel