

Head Lice and Nits

Even thinking about them makes you want to **itch**: lice and nits. They usually **affect** the heads children. Although they are usually found in these areas, there is one thing that they cannot do: **jump!**

But this is only one of the myths connected to head lice. There are others, such as poor hygiene and **dirty towels**, to name but two. The fact is that head lice feel at home on the **cleanest** of **scalps**. The female **louse** needs certain conditions for laying her eggs: the temperature of the human body, a clean shaft of hair, and blood that it feeds on from the scalp. The egg can only develop into the next stage, the nymph form,

if it is attached near enough for incubation, usually about four millimetres from the scalp. **Nowadays**, there are a whole range of treatments available to help **combat** an **infestation** of pediculosis capitis.

Female customer: Guten Morgen, sprechen Sie bitte Englisch?

PTA: Good morning, yes I do. How may I help you?

I have no idea how so say this in German: my three children all have head lice!

Head lice? Don't worry, you are not alone. You are the fourth customer that we have had this morning with the same problem! I have no idea how they got them.

Oh, there are lots of ways that children can transfer lice from one to the other. Things like sharing hats or bicycle helmets. Another possibility is when the children have their heads together when they are working on something, like during **arts and crafts** classes. Or even at something as harmless as a **slumber party**.

I've got a **green prescription**. Here it is.

Pyrethrum. Yes, we have it **in stock**. Did your doctor explain how to use it?

Yes, she did.

How old are your children?

Between 11 and 15. Why?

This is not recommended for young children. Have you checked other family members for nits or lice?

No. Should I?

Just to be sure. Lice or nits may be spread by more than one family member using the same combs and brushes.

Oh no! Does that mean that we'll have to get new hairbrushes and combs?

No necessarily. You can soak the brushes and combs overnight in warm soapy water. Although lice are fairly robust, it is easy to get rid of them if you just make sure that there are no eggs left on hair or near the scalps affected. That's good.

Are any of your children allergic to chrysanthemums or **ragweed**?

No, not that I know of.

It's also not recommended for people with such allergies. Do you have a nit comb?

No, we don't. This is the first time for us.

We have this very effective comb here. It is best to use it on wet hair.

How often do I need to use the pyrethrum?

You can apply it now and repeat the application in six to nine days. If it hasn't improved, you should consult your doctor.

Thanks again. Goodbye!

Bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

Lice	Läuse
Nits	Nissen
itch	jucken
affect	betreffen
jump	springen
dirty towels	schmutzige Handtücher
cleanest	sauberste
scalp	Kopfhaut
louse	Laus
nowadays	heutzutage
combat	bekämpfen
infestation	Befall, Heimsuchung
arts and crafts	Basteln
slumber party	Pyjamaparty
green prescription	Grünes Rezept
in stock	auf Lager
ragweed	Beifußblättrige Ambrosie