

by Scott_LaFee

In industrialized countries, 1 percent to 3 percent of children ages 6 to 12 are afflicted with head lice. For parents, teachers and, well, just about anybody who has contact with the affected kids (not to mention the kids themselves), it's critical to quickly and accurately identify infections.

The two primary methods are visual inspections and wet combing, but neither method has ever been scientifically evaluated for its efficacy, and health professionals say children are commonly overdiagnosed with lice infections that are, in fact, extinct.

In the March issue of *Archives of Dermatology*, German researchers for the first time compared visual inspections and wet combing, deducing that each best serves a different purpose. Combing through a child's wet hair, they said, can lead to more accurate identification of active head lice. Visual inspections can yield a more precise assessment of the number of children who have eggs or nits in their hair.

We say do both “ and hurry up.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

In experiments testing how human sperm responded to different odors (the research was conducted at Ruhr University in 2003), scientists determined that sperm were most attracted to the floral scent lily of the valley.

GET ME THAT. STAT!

Almost 30 million Americans age 65 and older have one or more chronic health conditions, according to the National Council on Aging.

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM

Next time you suffer from a stuffed nose, the problem may not be in your nostrils “ at least the first set. Humans actually have two pairs of nostrils. The first pair are pretty obvious; the second pair are located farther back in the head. They're called choanae (Greek for funnels) and connect to the throat. These nostrils allow us to breathe through our noses.

NUMBER CRUNCHER

A large apple (about 3 inches in diameter) contains 110 calories, 3 from fat. It has 0.4 grams of total fat or 1 percent of the recommended total fat intake for a 2,000-calorie daily diet.

It also contains 0 milligrams of cholesterol; 2 mg of sodium (less than 1 percent); 29 grams of total carbohydrates (10 percent); 5 g of dietary fiber (20 percent); 22 g of sugar and 0.6 g of protein.

OBSERVATION

To avoid delay, please have all your symptoms ready.

â€” Notice in an English doctor's waiting room

MEET GERM

Proteus mirabilis is a highly motile bacterium that's part of the typical intestinal flora of humans and other animals. It can also be found in decomposing meat and sewage.

In the intestine, its powerful enzymes help break down compounds, but *P. mirabilis* occasionally migrates to the bladder, where it can cause infections and stones in the bladder, ureters or kidneys.

Infections are quite painful. Antibiotics are prescribed, but vary depending upon existing bacterial resistance. No vaccine is available.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Heliophobia â€” fear of the sun

MEDTRONICA

Healthmad

healthmad.com

The site features a quirky collection of health news and essays. Some of the reports are quite informational and useful, such as coping with menopause or kidney stone treatments. Others are merely, oddly interesting: a week without sleep, for example, or the dangers of instant noodles.

LAST WORDS

I feel certain that I'm going mad again. I feel we can't go through another of those terrible times. And I shan't recover this time. I begin to hear voices.

â€” Suicide note of author Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

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WellNews: Lice, twice by Scott_LaFee