

# Manual Removal of Lice and Nits

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Manually removing lice and nits may be effective at quickly resolving a head lice infestation. Pediculicide treatment may not be 100 percent ovicidal. For this reason, removing viable eggs may prevent the need for a second treatment. Whether using a pediculicide or manual removal as a stand-alone treatment, the more lice and nits that are combed from the hair, the faster the infestation will be resolved.

To manually remove lice after pediculicide treatment or as a stand-alone treatment:

- Work in an area with good visibility and light, such as from a lamp or natural sunlight through a window.
- Make sure a standard comb moves through the hair without difficulty before attempting to use a fine-toothed lice comb. Combing may be easier if the person's hair is slightly wet.
- Part the hair into sections and hold sections in place with rubber bands or hair clips.
- Sit behind the person and use a bright light (and magnification if available) to inspect and comb through the hair, one small section at a time. Remove nits using the comb, fingernails, or by cutting the strands of hair.
- Clean the louse comb frequently to remove any caught lice or eggs using soapy water or paper towel. It may require several hours each night for several nights to successfully remove all nits and lice. An entertaining video may help keep children occupied during this exercise.
- Combing may be repeated daily until no lice are seen. Continue monitoring for two to three weeks.



Many types of fine-toothed combs may be included within packages of pediculicides, or they may be purchased from most drug stores or internet retailers. The effectiveness depends on their composition (metal or plastic) and construction (length and spacing) of the comb teeth, the texture of the hair to be combed, combing technique, and the time and care expended in the effort. Electronic combs may be useful for detection (if vision is limited), since they emit a sound when a live louse is present.