



## Steps for Treating Head Lice

### What Should I Do If My Child Gets Head Lice?

#### Facts About Head Lice

##### What Are They?

1. Head Lice are yellowish-white insects that live on the human scalp.
2. Lice don't have wings, and they cannot fly, hop, or jump.
3. Head lice are about 1/8 inch long. Lice are as big as a sesame seed.
4. Head lice are difficult to see because they are so small and move very quickly.
5. Itching of the scalp may be the first sign of head lice.
6. Most often, what you will see are the oval eggs (nits) which have been laid by the lice.
7. The eggs are laid close to the scalp (eggs farther than 1/2 inch from the scalp are probably already hatched or dead).
8. The nits are off white in color and are attached to the hair by a cement-like substance.
9. Lice do not cause disease; they are more of an embarrassment and nuisance.

##### How Do You Get It?

1. Lice are passed from direct personal contact (head-to-head contact or combs, hats, or coats).
2. Lice are not passed in swimming pools, and you cannot get them from pets.

##### Who Gets Them?

1. Lice can live on any person's head - regardless of age, income, social status, or cleanliness.
2. If one child has lice, check the hair of everyone else in your house.

## **What Do I Do?**

Follow these steps to get rid of head lice:

1. Apply a lice-killing hair product (shampoo or crème rinse).
2. Remove the nits.
3. Clean the home.

## **How To Apply The Lice-Killing Hair Product (Shampoo or Crème Rinse) Correctly:**

1. Only treat the hair of people who have head lice or nits.
2. Buy the lice-killing hair product from the grocery or drugstore or get it from the doctor.
3. Apply the hair product exactly according to the package directions. The label will tell you either on dry or wet hair.
4. Cover the hair completely with the hair product.
5. Leave the lice-killing hair product on the correct length of time. Use a watch or timer.
6. Wash the hair with regular shampoo. Check the contents of the regular shampoo. If the shampoo contains silicone, it may keep the head lice product from working properly.

## **How to Remove the Nits:**

1. Work under a good light (sunlight, a strong lamp, or magnifying light).
2. Divide and fasten the hair in sections, working each section separately.
3. Look through each section of hair for nits, starting at the scalp and working outward.
4. Remove the nits by pulling down the length of the hair with your fingernails. Put the nits in a trash bag and throw them away.
5. A metal lice comb may help.
6. It takes time to remove nits. It may take several hours.

### **How To Clean The Home:**

1. Wash all bedding, towels and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer for twenty (20) minutes.
2. Non-washable items (such as stuffed animals or wool coats) can be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for two (2) weeks.
3. If unable to wash clothes or bag items for two (2) weeks, they can be put in the dryer for twenty (20) minutes on high heat.
4. Vacuum the upholstered furniture, rugs, and car seats.
5. Soak combs and brushes in hot (not boiling) water for ten (10) minutes.
6. You do not need to have a pest control company spray your home.

### **Do Not Use Lice Sprays**

#### **Follow Up Steps:**

1. Check everyone's hair daily for at least 7-10 days.
2. After 7-10 days if there are still nits or lice, use the lice-killing hair product again.
3. If more lice or nits are found, you will have to remove the nits and clean the home again in addition to treating the hair again.
4. Call your doctor about head lice treatment:
  - if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
  - for children under two (2) years old.
  - if the skin of the scalp is broken or infected.
  - if there are lice in the eyebrows or eyelashes.
  - if the head lice continue after two (2) treatments with the lice-killing hair product.

**Reminders:**

1. Lice are passed by direct personal contact.
2. Do not over-treat the hair; follow the directions on the head lice product exactly.
3. Only treat the hair of persons who have head lice or nits.
4. Home remedies like mayonnaise, olive oil, and petroleum jelly are not recommended.
5. **Do not use kerosene or gasoline.**
6. Do not shave the head.
7. Itching may continue for a week or two (2) after treatment, because the lice-killing hair products dry the scalp.
8. Check for lice often during the school year.
9. Lice do not cause disease, but it will take time and work to get rid of them.
10. For additional information contact your school nurse or local health department.