

Nit Removal



While nit removal is not required for a student to return to school, nit removal is highly recommended to decrease the chance of re-infestation. Checking the hair regularly will make it easier to determine if the treatment is working, or if re-infestation has occurred.

After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days will help decrease the chance of self re-infestation. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.



To use a nit comb:

- First, comb through hair with a regular comb or brush.
- Next, select a starting point on the head and comb through small sections of hair at a time with no more hair than the width of the comb, beginning at the base of the scalp.
- Continue combing until you have combed the entire head.
- Using the nit comb again when the hair is dry often makes it easier to see the nits.
- Soak nit comb and regular comb or brush in hot water or run through dishwasher between uses to disinfect.

Laundry and household cleaning



It is not necessary to spend a lot of time or money on household cleaning activities. Laundry and household cleaning efforts of most importance include:

- Washing the following items with hot water and/or place in dryer on high heat for 20 minutes:
 - All bed linens of the person with head lice, including mattress pad, sheets, blankets and pillows.
 - All clothing worn by the person with head lice within the 2-day period prior to treatment.
 - Stuffed animals that a child sleeps with or enclose in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.
- Vacuuming the floor and furniture, particularly where the person with lice sat or lay.
- Soaking nit comb, hair combs, brushes, and hair clips in very hot water or run through dishwasher.

What can be done about persistent or resistant head lice?

- The presence of **live lice** or **new nits** (eggs) within ¼" of the scalp after treatment may indicate treatment has failed.
- Consult a healthcare provider to see if a prescription product is needed.
- Feel free to visit with the school nurse for guidance.

Things not to do:

- Do not use kerosene, gasoline or animal pesticides.
- Do not use lice products more often than recommended.
- Do not use bug bombs or commercial lice sprays. They are not effective and can be toxic to children.
- Do not treat pets.

Head lice are not a serious disease, but they are a serious nuisance! Success in lice treatment depends on frequent checking (daily preferred for the first month) by an adult household member to be sure that all lice and nits are gone.

Students may return to school after the use of a lice-treatment product. We discourage students from missing school due to head lice.

For addition information, we recommend the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

School nurse comments:

Head Lice Management Guide

Head Lice Management Guide

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny, crawling insects the size of a sesame seed that live **ONLY** on human heads. They depend on human blood for their survival.

- Head lice **CANNOT** fly or jump, but can crawl fast.
- They lay eggs, called nits, on the hair shaft. Nits are tiny, the size of the eye of a needle, oval shaped and vary from light gray to dark brown in color.



Finding live lice or nits within 6 mm (1/4") of the scalp indicates the presence of head lice. Unlike dandruff, which can be easily removed, a type of insect "super glue" cements nits to the hairs. Nits are usually found close to the scalp, behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.

What is the life cycle of a louse (lice)?

The average lifespan of a louse is 30 days. They prefer to remain on the head. However, without access to human blood (their only source of food), a louse will die within 1 to 2 days. A female louse lays many nits in her lifetime. The nits hatch in 7-10 days and become live lice – starting the cycle all over again.

Parents taking the time to inspect children weekly for lice will help to catch an infestation early on, making it easier to treat.

How are head lice spread?

Most of the time head lice spread by direct contact with an infested person's head (head-to-head touching). Lice do not spread to or from pets. Lice do not jump or fly; they crawl.

We also recommend **NOT** sharing:

- Personal items such as clothing, combs, headbands, hair ornaments, hats, and scarves.
- Towels, linens, pillows or stuffed and cloth toys.
- Beds during sleepovers.

While the above items are not frequently the reason head lice spread, avoiding sharing these items and other activities such as placing heads close together might help to lessen the spread of head lice.

What are the symptoms of head lice?

- Intense itching or tickling feeling on the head and scalp
- Scratch marks/sores on the scalp that may look like a rash
- Irritability and difficulty sleeping (Lice are more active at night.)
- **Or** there may be **no symptoms** at all.

What to **DO** if you have head lice?

Contact your healthcare provider **BEFORE** treatment if the person with head lice

- Has used a lice product within the past seven days,
- Has allergies, asthma or other medical conditions,
- Is under the age of two, or
- Is pregnant or breast-feeding.

Where to start?

Notify all people who have recently been in contact with your child, and notify the school and/or day care.

Check all household members for head lice and treat only those with live lice or nits (eggs) within 1/4" of scalp.

DO NOT treat other non-infected household members. Besides wasting money, this can lead to lice becoming resistant to products.

Some experts **DO RECOMMEND** treating **bedmates** of the person with lice **regardless** of finding live lice and/or nits.

Hair treatment

There are a variety of treatment products available such as Nix®, Rid®, and prescription products. The school nurse is available to visit with you about product selection. Following are some general principles for use with treatment products:

- Remember to contact your health care provider or the school nurse first for product advice if this is not the first time the student or person has been treated for lice.
- Treat all of the following **on the same day:**
 - *The person with lice*
 - *Bedmates of the person with lice*
 - *All household members who have live lice or nits (eggs) within 1/4" of scalp.*
- Use caution with all lice products.
- **Follow product directions carefully** (especially instructions about hair conditioners and rewashing hair).
- Use enough product to completely coat **ALL** the hair.
- Rinse off the head lice shampoo over a sink with the child positioned face up (not in the shower or tub to avoid contact with eyes).
- Check product directions regarding retreatment.
- **DO NOT OVERUSE** or retreat more often than the treatment label suggests. After treatment, it may take up to 24 hours for lice to die.

