

Parent Instruction

How do you treat for lice?

Several methods are used to treat head lice/nits, including: over-the-counter (OTC) shampoos, strictly non-chemical, manual nit removal, and other non-chemical substances.

School Nurses recommend buying a separate metal lice comb. The comb is used to remove live lice and can assist in removal or loosening of nits. The single most important item in the procedure to treat lice is to remove the all of the nits (eggs).

*Call your pediatrician for guidelines, especially in a child who has sensitive skin or allergies.

Everyone in the family should be checked, and anyone with nits should definitely be treated. (Pets do not get lice.)

If your PCP recommends an OTC shampoo, please read the instructions below before doing the treatment:

1. First comb out the hair if it is tangled with a brush or wide toothed comb (not the metal lice comb). Do not use conditioner or tangle free sprays.
2. Over the counter brand and generic lice shampoos contain pyrethrins or 1% permethrin which kill lice, but not all nits. Lice treatment kits are not always 100% effective, with some failures reported: live lice seen even after the treatment! The shampoo should kill the live lice, but are not usually effective in killing the nits.
3. Follow the directions exactly, on DRY hair that has not been conditioned. Water triggers lice to close their breathing

apparatus through which the chemical must enter, and dilutes the shampoo. Conditioners coat hair and protect the lice and nits. DO NOT use lice treatment shampoo more frequently than indicated on the box directions.

4. After using the product and rinsing it out, (over the kitchen sink, preferred) comb the hair in small sections, using a metal lice comb. Observe for dead and stunned lice. Lice are small insects, brown in color and are elongated, not round.

5. Separate the hair into small sections and remove all nits, using clips to separate sections. You will need a good light, or a sunny window, magnified glasses and a pointy ended comb to help separate hair sections.

6. To remove nits: isolate the nit, then using the thumb and index fingernails, slide the nit all the way off the hair, depositing it on a piece of tape or sticky lint roller. Remove nits one at a time, clipping off hair into sections. Nits are tiny specs, oval shaped, pearly color, found about ¼” from the scalp. Any nits found over an inch from the scalp may be empty casings from hatched eggs, however just to be sure, remove these as well. Nits are “glued” to the hair shaft and do not flake away as in dandruff or other hair debris (from hair spray or dirt). Removal of all nits is essential to the success of lice treatment. **THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM ON THIS LIST IS TO REMOVE ALL OF THE NITS!**

7. Do not wash the hair with regular shampoo afterwards for at least a few days. The product continues to work for 24-48 hours.

*

8. ** If you see live lice after a treatment, call your PCP and notify your school nurse. Definitely re-comb with the metal lice comb, which will catch live lice and remove them from the head.

9. ****Nit removal is a very tedious, time consuming process, thus the phrase “nitpicking”. There are several agencies providing nit removal, for a fee, and the nurse can provide this information if you are interested.*

10. The metal lice comb should be used DAILY, to remove any live lice, stunned lice or dead lice, and to help loosen nits. Use a bit of conditioner on the comb to help it go through the hair sections more easily.

11. Check for nits for the next month. Repeat lice treatment shampoo if directed on the product directions, but no sooner than indicated, usually in 5-7 days. Once you have removed all nits, continue to check daily! If you see live lice or newly laid nits, contact your PCP and notify your school nurse.

12. Review with your child the importance of not sharing hair accessories, brushes and clothing such as hats and scarves. For those with long hair it is best to encourage them to wear their hair in braids or pony tails.

Household cleaning as part of the treatment procedure:

- Wash clothing worn in the past two to three days, including coats, hats etc.
- Wash bedding and pillow covers. Complete wash cycle with a hot dryer, this is key.
- Seal items that cannot be washed or dried (such as stuffed animals) in a plastic bag for a week. Any live lice, eggs or nits will die from lack of warmth and a blood source).

- Soak combs and brushes for ten minutes in hot, soapy water or wash them with a shampoo approved to kill lice. Apply heat with hot hair dryer to helmets for about 10 minutes.
- Thoroughly vacuum rugs, upholstered furniture, mattresses, and the interior of your car. Throw away the vacuum bag.
- Continue putting bed linens, sheets, pillowcases and blankets in the hot dryer every day until there are no nits seen at all for at least a week.

Updated 7/11