

Lice Awareness Wednesday

10 Steps To Staying Ahead of Lice

1. Watch for signs of head lice, such as frequent head scratching. Anyone can get head lice... mainly by head-to-head contact but also from sharing hats, brushes and headrests. Lice do not jump or fly.
2. Check all family members for lice and nits (lice eggs) at least once a week. Only those infested should be treated. Lice are reddish-brown wingless insects, nits are grayish-white, always oval shaped, and are glued at an angle to the side of the hair shaft.
3. Be sure not to confuse nits with hair debris such as bright irregularly shaped clumps of dandruff stuck to the hair shaft or elongated segments of dandruff encircling the hair shaft and easily dislodged. Lice treatment is not appropriate for hair debris.
4. Consult your pharmacist or physician before applying or using lice treatment pesticides when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, has pre-existing medical conditions, or has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. Never use a pesticide on or near the eyes.
5. Remember, all lice-killing products are pesticides. If you choose to purchase an over-the-counter treatment, follow the directions carefully and use with caution. If the product fails, do not switch to other over-the-counter treatments or use any prescription products as a "last resort". This can be potentially harmful. Manual Removal is the safe alternative and a necessary component to any head lice treatment regimen.
6. Follow package directions carefully. Use the product over the sink, not in the tub or shower. Always keep the eyes covered.
7. **Remove all nits.** This assures total lice treatment. Separate hair in sections and remove all attached nits with the NPA's LiceMeister[®] comb, baby safety scissors, or your fingernails.
8. Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Combs and brushes may be soaked in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.
9. **Avoid lice sprays!** Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats.
10. Notify your child's school, camp, child care provider, and neighborhood parents to report a lice outbreak. Check for lice on a regular basis. This is the best way to protect your family and community.