

HEAD LICE

Anyone can get head lice...whether they are clean or dirty, rich or poor. These parasites infest over 12 million American each year. While they are annoying or upsetting, head lice are not harmful and do not cause disease.

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

- Head lice are small grayish-tan insects the size of a sesame seed that can make your head itch!
- They do not hop, jump, or fly!
- Lice need human blood to survive and will die within 48 hours if they cannot find a “meal”.
- Adult lice lay eggs called nits that attach firmly to hair near the scalp. It takes about 7 days for the nits to hatch. The newly hatched lice can start laying eggs in about 7 days. Adult lice can live for 30 days and can lay 4 to 8 eggs a day

HOW DO LICE SPREAD?

- Most often lice are spread by head-to-head contact with a person that has lice.
- Lice can spread by wearing another person’s clothing or hat, or by sharing combs, brushes, or hair accessories.
- Lice can also spread by clothing that is in a shared locker or piled on top of each other.
- Pets do not carry human lice.

HOW TO CHECK FOR LICE

- The lice are hard to see and move quickly, so you can usually tell you have them by finding their eggs or nits on the hair near the scalp.
- The best place to start looking is at the hairline, behind the ears and the back of the neck.
- Nits are tiny and oval, yellowish to tan to gray in color. Unlike dandruff, nits cannot be shaken off.

CHEMICAL TREATMENT

- NIX is a 10 minutes hair rinse. Wash the hair first with regular shampoo, rinse, and towel dry. Apply Nix to the hair, saturating the hair and scalp. Allow the Nix to remain on the hair for 10 minutes, then rinse out. Do not use on children under the age of 2 years. Do not use with any other lice treatment, with any other crème rinse, shampoo containing crème rinse, hair spray, mousses, gels, oil or vinegar for at least 1 week after using. They weaken the action of Nix. Using regular shampoo after a treatment is okay. Do not use

with an allergy to pyrethrins, or chrysanthemums. Nix has a high ovicidal activity and remains active for 2 weeks.

- RID, TRIPLE X, CLEAR & A-200 are 10-minute shampoos. Apply to dry hair and scalp until wet. Shampoo hair for 10 minutes. Rinse thoroughly. Shampoo with regular shampoo. The ovicidal activity is low. Repeat application in 7 to 10 days, if necessary. Do not use with and allergy to ragweed.
- Chemical treatments can be bought from drug or grocery stores.
- DO NOT USE when open sores are present.
- Pregnant/breastfeeding women should consult with their healthcare provider before using.
- Never use them more than recommended. They are insecticides and can be poisonous if used improperly.

CHEMICAL-FREE TREATMENT

- Olive oil treatment – The Harvard School of Public Health confirmed that olive oil smothers and kills active adult lice. Other oils may work. Apply the oil to hair and scalp. Cover hair with shower or swim cap. Plastic wrap can also be used. **DO NOT LEAVE SMALL CHILDREN UNATTENDED WITH ANY TYPE OF PLASTIC ON THEIR HEAD!** Leave the oil in the hair for at least 8 hours. It may take several shampoos to get all of the oil out. This treatment can be repeated as many times as needed.
- Water-based products such as Lice-Out or Hair-Clean 1-2-3 are available. Follow instructions on the boxes.

NIT REMOVAL

- Nit removal takes a lot of time and effort. It can be uncomfortable for a child and parent. Sit the child in front of the TV or a video and take frequent breaks. Work in good light.
- Nit removal is very important to do. If the nits are not removed, they can hatch and the whole process can start over again! This can occur even if a treatment was done!
- Place a towel between the hair and shoulders of the person who has head lice.
- Start at the top of the hear, so any nits or lice that fall will be combed out as you work downwards.
- Check thin sections (about 1 inch square) of hair and comb each section with a fine-tooth nit comb (Licemeister or Liceout).
- Nits may be removed by hand.
- After each comb-through, dip the lice comb in hot water and wipe with a paper towel.
- Clip up the completed sections.
- Continue “nit-picking” until all the hair has been combed

- A solution of ½ vinegar and ½ water can be applied to the hair with a cotton ball. This helps loosen the glue that holds the nits on the hair. Avoid getting the vinegar solution into the eyes and do not use with open sores. Nit removal using vinegar should be done before using Nix. Shampoo the vinegar solution out of the hair before using the Nix treatment.

RECHECK FOR NITS EVERY DAY FOR 10-14 DAYS

HOME ENVIRONMENT

- Clothing, bed sheets, blankets, mattress covers, pillows and towels should be washed in hot soapy water and dried in a dryer on the hot cycle for 30 minutes.
- If an item cannot be washed (cloth toys, stuffed animals, feather pillows, leather coats), seal it in a plastic bag for 14 days.
- Items can be dry-cleaned.
- Carpets, floors, car seats, mattresses, upholstery in cars, and furniture all need to be vacuumed. Lice sprays are not recommended.
- Soak combs, brushes, and anything worn in the hair in hot water, alcohol, Lysol, or lice shampoo; rinse for 1 hour.

HOW CAN LICE OUTBREAKS BE PREVENTED?

- Treat the hair right away if you find lice.
- Do not share clothing, combs, brushes, and hair accessories, hats, helmets with anyone.
- Provide separate storage areas for each person's clothing and other personal articles. Coats or jackets should not be piled on the floor or hanging where they touch each other.
- Parents need to be aware of the lice situation when children spend the night at other homes and when other children come and stay at your home.

NATIONAL PEDICULOSIS ASSOCIATION
<http://www.headlice.org>