

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Getting rid of head lice is a time-consuming process, but it's not impossible! Lice are spread through direct contact and the sharing of personal items. If every parent will take the responsibility to **CHECK A HEAD** and screen the entire family often, the problem can be prevented or detected early and controlled. This is often a frustrating problem to deal with, but the following information should help you to identify and treat your child for head lice safely and thoroughly.

How Do You Get Lice?

Many people associate head lice with unclean people or homes. This is not true. Frequent bathing or shampooing will not prevent lice nor eliminate them once they are established. Lice cannot jump or fly and are usually transmitted by direct contact with a person, their clothing or their comb or brush. Children should be warned against sharing hats, clothing or grooming aids with others. Household pets do not transmit lice.

What to Look For

Lice are small insects about the size of a sesame seed. They are usually light brown but can vary in color. They move quickly and shy away from the light, making them difficult to see. Diagnosis is more often made on the basis of finding nits (eggs). Nits are tiny, yellowish-white oval eggs attached to the hair shafts. Note: The old quarter inch from the scalp rule has given way to new evidence suggesting that viable (live) nits may be found at any distance from the scalp. As she deposits her eggs (3-5 per day), the female louse cements them to the hair, and unlike lint or dandruff, they will not wash off or blow away. Hair casts or pseudo-nits are often mistaken for lice eggs. Nits may be found throughout the hair, but are most often located at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and at the crown. It helps to use a magnifying glass and natural light when looking for them. Distinguishing dead nits from live nits is non-productive since the presence of ten dead nits does not guarantee that the eleventh won't be viable.

Symptoms of Head Lice

The itching that occurs when lice bite

is a primary symptom of head lice, although not everyone will experience the itching. Children seen scratching their heads should be examined at once. Often red bite marks or scratch marks can be seen on the scalp and neck.

Treatment of the Individuals

Before one family member is treated, all should be examined. Only those showing evidence of lice or nits should be treated. Treat them at the same time to prevent transmission from one family member to another. Individual treatment involves the use of an over the counter head lice killing product and the use of a fine toothed comb for the purpose of nit removal. Proceed as follows:



1. Remove child's shirt and provide a towel to protect the eyes. Do not treat in the bathtub or shower, but have the child lean over the sink (this confines the lice product to the scalp/neck.)

2. Use one of several louse remedies available at your pharmacy. Some are available by prescription; some are over the counter. Consult your physician if you are pregnant or nursing (whether treating yourself or others). Consult your physician before treating anyone with extensive cuts or scratches on the head or neck, or anyone who is ill or using medications. Consult your physician if lice/nits are found in the eyebrows or eyelashes. No lice killing remedy should be used in the eye area.

DO NOT USE THESE PRODUCTS ON INFANTS. AVOID PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE SPRAYS. READ ALL PACKAGE INFORMATION BEFORE USING THESE PRODUCTS!*****

3. Although it can take time and sometimes be difficult, remove all nits to ensure complete treatment and to comply with No Nit Policies. ****

Louse products do not kill all the nits,



and survivors will hatch into live lice within 7-10 days. Nit removal can be accomplished with a Fine tooth comb or by picking them out with the

fingernails. Nits can also be cut out with small safety scissors.

4. Following its removal, have child put on clean clothing and let hair air-dry.

5. A daily nit check is advisable for at least 10 days following treatment and thereafter checking should become part of routine hygiene. You may have to retreat in 7-10 days if there is evidence of new nits or newly-hatched lice.

Treatment of Personal Articles and Environment

1. Machine-wash all clothing and bed linens. Articles should be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. Non-washables can be vacuumed or dry-cleaned.

2. Vacuum all furniture, carpets, mattresses, and car seats. Personal articles that cannot be washed, such as bedspreads, blankets, pillows, or stuffed animals should be dry cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for a period of two weeks.

Communication

Notify your child's school, daycare setting, babysitter, etc. so that other parents can be alerted to a possible outbreak. Also notify the parents of your child's playmates. Parental cooperation will help protect all children including your own.

* Manual mechanical removal of lice and eggs is a non-pesticide alternative for infants, pregnant women, etc.

**Package directions for NIX suggest it is not necessary to remove nits. The NPA recommends nit removal following treatment with all products.

*** **The NO Nit Policy is an administrative, public health policy for control and prevention of head lice outbreaks.**

CAUTION: Parents of children with health problems, open wounds or a history of asthma or allergies should consult with their physician.

For more information on Lice the following web sites contain a wealth of information:

<http://www.pediculosis.com/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

<http://www.headlice.org/>