



# Lice Treatment and Information

Children tend to pass lice along when there is direct contact of the head or hair with an infested individual or when they play closely with others. Lice can also be spread through the sharing of personal articles like hats, towels, brushes, helmets, and hair ties. There is also a possibility of spreading head lice via pillows, head rests, or similar items. Head lice do not jump or fly, and generally cannot survive longer than 24 hours off of the human host.

Head lice and nits (lice eggs) can be very difficult to remove completely. Here are some tips to safely get rid of the lice and nits, prevent future infestations and keep your children in the classroom:

- Check all family members for lice and nits at least once a week. Only those infested should be treated because of the toxicity of prolonged exposure to the shampoo. 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, usually closest to the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and close to the scalp.
- Consult your pharmacist or physician before using lice treatment pesticides when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, asthma, or epilepsy, has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes, or if pesticides have been used frequently in the past because of lice issues. Never use a pesticide on or near eyes.
- Most lice-killing products are pesticides. If you choose to buy an over-the-counter treatment, follow the directions carefully and with caution. Use the product over the sink, not in the tub or shower. Always keep the eyes covered. Most shampoos say to use on DRY hair. Using the treatment on wet hair is ineffective.
- Make sure to have good lighting. Go outside to get natural light, or take the lamp shade off of a lamp for better lighting to see the lice and nits.
- Nit picking is always a safe alternative, and a necessary component of any head lice treatment regimen.
- Separate hair in sections and remove all attached nits with a comb, baby safety scissors, and/or your fingernails.
- Wash bedding, recently worn clothing, towels, and hats in hot, soapy water and dry in a hot dryer.
- Wash combs, brushes, and all hair accessories in hot, soapy water, or soak in rubbing alcohol for an hour.
- Store contaminated un-washable items in airtight bags for two to three weeks.
- Avoid lice sprays. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, mattresses, stuffed animals, and car seats.
- Recheck hair one week after treatment.



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#### Health Services

Head lice and nits are a serious problem. Missing an excessive number of days due to head lice or nits is a reportable offense. If you would like more information or alternative treatment options, please contact your school health office.

Information was gathered from <http://www.headlice.org/>, National Pediculosis Associate, and the Mayo Clinic.