

How to treat head lice

If you find head lice:

- 1 Comb the head carefully with a lice comb. Put the teeth of the lice comb next to the scalp and pull the comb down the whole length of the hair.
- 2 If the comb tugs the hair, use more conditioner.
- 3 After each stroke, rinse the comb in a sink or bowl of warm water, and wipe it dry. Then check the comb and your fingernails for lice. (You don't want to put any lice back in the hair.)
- 4 Comb the whole head, section by section.
- 5 Keep combing until you find no more lice. Comb the whole head a couple of times after the last louse was found.
- 6 Rinse the hair to remove the conditioner.
- 7 Sit upright, leaving the hair dripping wet. "The wetter the better".
- 8 Untangle the hair with a wide-tooth comb. Then use a fine-tooth comb.
- 9 Comb the whole head carefully with a lice comb. You may again find a few lice.



- 10 Keep combing until you find no more lice. Comb the whole head a couple of times after the last louse was found.
- 11 Repeat this treatment every 3-4 days for 2 weeks (see "Days to treat" below). This will remove the lice as soon as they hatch and before they can multiply or move to someone else.

Days to treat:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

12 If you find an adult louse on any day after day 1 of the treatment, these are NEW lice, and you will need to treat the hair for ANOTHER two weeks.



13 It is important to check the hair of everyone who lives with you. Do this when the hair is wet with conditioner. If you find lice, you need to do the treatment.

14 After each treatment, clean everything you have used, like combs and towels. Wash hats, sheets and pillow cases. It is not necessary to spend a lot of time cleaning the house. It is better to spend the time checking the hair of everyone who lives with you.

15 When you treat someone with wet combing, make sure you are both comfortable. The person being treated should sit at a good height for you. Put a towel over the shoulders to catch drips, and let the person watch a video or read a book.



GETTING RID OF HEAD LICE by Wet Combing

A non-chemical method
of treating head lice

If you have questions about Head Lice call a Public Health Nurse at your local Public Health Unit.

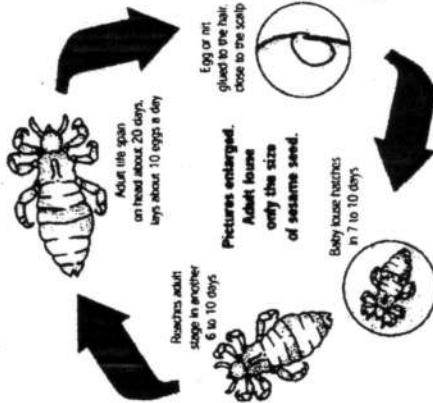
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This is a safe way of getting rid of head lice. You don't need to use pesticides, and it doesn't cost much.

- Facts about head lice**
- Lice are tiny insects, about the size of a sesame seed.
 - Lice live only on a person's head.
 - Anyone who has hair can get lice.
 - Lice do not jump or fly.
 - Lice can move quickly on dry hair, so they are difficult to see.
 - Lice bites can make the scalp itchy.



- Adult lice lay about 10 eggs (called nits) every day. These nits are stuck to the hair near the scalp.
- It takes 7-10 days for the nits to hatch.
- It takes 6-10 days for a louse to become an adult. Up to that time, it stays on the head, but does not lay eggs.

- You can normally find the nits behind the ears or on the back of the neck.
- Nits can have different colours and are about 1/3 the size of a sesame seed.
- You can't get rid of nits by brushing, or with a hair dryer.
- After the lice hatch, the shell of the nit stays stuck to the hair. If it is more than 12mm (1/2 inch) away from the scalp, it is probably empty.
- You can get lice by touching heads with someone who has lice, or by sharing combs, brushes and hats.
- Lice are common where children play or work closely together.
- Lice do not cause disease.

Find and treat as soon as you can

- Use **WET COMBING** to see if there are any lice on the head.
- Lice move quickly on dry hair, so you cannot see them easily.
- If you put conditioner in the hair, the lice cannot move, so you can see them when you comb them out.

When to check for head lice

- Once a week after shampooing;
- If anyone in your home is scratching his/her head more than usual;
- If you get a note about lice from the daycare or school;
- If your child's playmates have head lice;
- At the end of school vacations. This is to make sure your child does not take head lice to school.

What you will need

- Shampoo (not expensive)
- Conditioner (white in colour, not expensive)
- Wide-tooth comb to untangle hair
- Fine-tooth comb to look for lice
- Hair clips (may be needed for long hair)
- Towels
- Paper towels
- Lice comb, for treatment if you find lice. (Most pharmacies sell lice combs.)



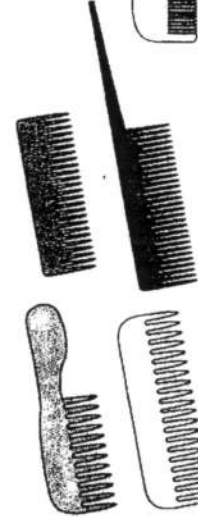
How to check for head lice

- 1 Shampoo the hair.
- 2 Rinse.
- 3 Put enough conditioner on to cover the whole scalp.
- 4 Untangle the hair with a wide-tooth comb.
- 5 Comb through the hair close to the scalp with a fine-tooth comb. After each stroke, wipe the comb on a paper towel and look for lice.
- 6 Make sure you comb the whole head. Have your child lean over the sink, and comb from the back of the head to the front.
- 7 If you find ANY lice, you need to **TREAT**.

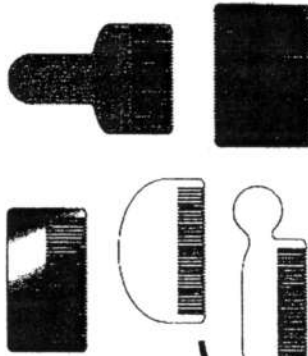


SEE OVER

Combs for checking or removing lice may look like any of the ones pictured here.



Some common styles of wide-tooth and fine-tooth combs



Some common styles of lice or nit combs



Licebusters



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HEAD LICE TREATMENT TWO ACCEPTABLE TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Check the heads of all family members for lice and nits as they are easily spread
- Treat all infested family members at the same time otherwise you may not rid your house of lice and the infestation will continue despite the treatments given

OPTION A	OPTION B
<p>Head Lice Shampoo (Kill the Head Lice and Remove the Nits)</p> <p>Special head lice shampoos/rinses are used because they have been tested and determined to be a safe and effective treatment.</p>	<p>Wet-Combing (Remove the Head Lice)</p> <p>A non-chemical way to find and eliminate head lice.</p>

DANGEROUS REMEDIES - DO NOT USE

The following treatments are either not effective and/or not safe:

Insect Sprays (Raid), Dyes
 Oil (WD40), Bleaches
 Gasoline, Chinese Chalk
 Flea Soap, Heat Directly on Scalp
 Alcohol, Enzyme Reactions
 Shaving Gel, Kerosene
 Shaving the Head, Garlic

Essential Oils (Pine, Tea Tree, Thyme, Rosemary, Eucalyptus etc....) are not recommended at this time due to limited data and possible toxicity concerns.



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OPTION A: Chemical Shampoo Treatment Kill the Lice and Remove the Nits

This option uses two applications of special lice shampoo to kill the lice on the head, followed by removing the nits from the hair. Some lice products may not be safe for infants or pregnant women. If re-infestation occurs contact your local health unit. ASK YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT LICE SHAMPOOS

Steps to Follow

Do	Remember
1. <u>Apply Lice Shampoo to dry hair.</u> Treat all infested family members at the same time. READ DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY!	1. Unless you treat all infested family members, head lice can be passed on from one person to another when heads touch.
2. <u>Remove all nits</u> by gently using a metal "nit" comb or use your fingers to pull nits from the single strands of hair.	2. Metal nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If it tugs the hair, it may be upside down. Place lice/nits in a bowl of hot soapy water. Flush down the toilet when done.
3. <u>If live, active lice are seen 24 to 48 hours after the first treatment</u> , resistance or a heavy infestation should be suspected. Immediate treatment is recommended using a different product, followed by a second treatment seven days later.	3. The medications should be kept out of the reach of young children. These medications cannot be used for infants. Pregnant or nursing mothers should only use head lice medications following advice from their doctor.
4. <u>Apply Lice Shampoo a second time</u> 7 - 10 days after the first shampoo. Repeat step 2.	4. A second shampoo will make sure that any head lice which hatch after the first shampoo will be killed before they have a chance to lay any eggs. Two shampoos and a follow-up head check with nit removal is the best way to make sure head lice are gone.
5. If live head lice or new nits are found, try Option B. Consult a Public Health Nurse if you have any questions.	5. Wet combing breaks the life cycle of head lice by removing them before they are grown and able to reproduce.

After Treatment Checklist

- Wash in hot water, all bedding, towels and clothes used in the past 2-3 days including those worn during treatment.
- Launder all washable clothing, bedding, and towels in small loads with hot water and/or put in hot dryer for 20 minutes.
- Wash hair brushes, combs and hair accessories (barrettes, ribbons, etc) with hot soapy water.
- Anything that can't be washed (i.e. blankets, coats, headwear, stuffed toys) can be treated by: placing in a closed plastic bag for 10 days or putting in a hot dryer for 20 minutes or putting in the freezer for 48 hours or ironing it.
- There is no evidence that a major cleaning of the house is needed to get rid of head lice. Only items that have been in direct contact with the affected person(s) need to be washed.
- Repeat treatment according to option chosen.
- Notify those in contact with child that lice/nits were found, ie; school, Brownies, Scouts, sports teams, friends.



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**OPTION B: Wet Combing Method
Remove the Lice**

Wet combing is based on the life cycle of lice. It focuses on removing the live lice and does not require removing nits from the head. Combing treatments are done every 3 – 4 days over a two week period – to break the life cycle of the lice by removing them before they are fully grown and able to spread or lay eggs.

This option is safe for infants and pregnant women. Re-infestation can occur – consult your local health unit if you need more options.

Steps to Follow

Do	Remember
1. <u>Wash hair</u> with ordinary shampoo and rinse.	1. Note: on average, a wet combing session takes about ½ hour per person
2. <u>Apply ½ cup of conditioner</u> (any brand) all over head and scalp. Do not rinse out the conditioner.	2. Untangle hair with a regular wide toothed comb. Wet conditioner will immobilize the lice.
3. <u>Comb</u> sections of hair using a metal nit comb. Divide the hair into small sections and firmly draw the comb from the scalp to the end of the hair. After each stroke rinse the comb in a sink or bowl of warm water and wipe dry. Do the entire head making sure the head stays very wet.	3. Metal nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If it tugs the hair it may be upside down.
4. <u>Rinse</u> hair. Leave the hair dripping wet. Repeat step 3 combing <u>without conditioner</u> until no lice are found.	4. Check the comb and your fingernails for lice (you don't want to give them a ride back to your head).
5. <u>Repeat</u> steps 1 – 4 every 3 – 4 days for two weeks (For example, wet comb on day 1, day 5, day 9, day 13)	5. Use a wide tooth comb to untangle and then use the fine tooth metal nit comb again.
6. If you find any lice following treatment, <u>this is a new infestation of lice</u> and you will need to wet comb the hair for another two weeks.	6. This breaks the life cycle of the louse by removing the lice before they are fully grown and able to spread or lay eggs.

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