

POLICY: JHCCA-E(2)
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HEAD LICE TREATMENT

Whenever children gather in groups, as at school, it is possible to pass head lice from child to child. Head lice, or *pediculosis*, is not a dangerous disease, but it is a nuisance and the itching it causes can lead to infections from scratching.

Lice are easily spread from child to child by the sharing of personal items such as combs, hats and clothing; as well as by close contact. Lice do not jump from person to person nor do animals carry them. They can be caught at a neighbor's, babysitter's, day care or relative's home as well as at school.

THE BEST WAY TO FIND HEAD LICE EARLY AND PREVENT ITS SPREAD IS FOR EACH PARENT TO GET IN THE HABIT OF CHECKING THEIR OWN CHILDREN'S HEADS FOR SIGNS OF HEAD LICE FREQUENTLY, EVEN WEEKLY!



Look for the tiny gray or brown insects or for the tiny white eggs or nits which are found stuck to the hair shaft, usually in clusters close to the scalp and frequently in the area behind the ears. The nits are very difficult to remove (as anyone whose child has had lice can tell you), unlike dandruff or hair spray particles which come off easily.

If you find evidence of lice (the insects or their eggs), keep your child home until treated with a lice-killing shampoo or pediculocide, which can be obtained from your doctor or drugstore. REMOVE ALL NITS! Be sure to check all family and household members and to follow the directions for the shampoo carefully. Clean all bedding, clothing and household articles as directed. And CONTINUE TO CHECK YOUR CHILD'S HEAD EVERY FEW DAYS FOR A MONTH for signs of a re-infestation. Even a few eggs that live through the treatment can hatch and start lice all over again.

Notify school if your child had lice so classmates can be checked. And let parents of your children's close friends be aware so they can check their children.

We do check for head lice at school when we have knowledge of an infestation. It is important for each household to do their part in preventing this problem from reoccurring.

Head Lice Control

Based on the best advice of the doctors contacted and from the available literature, the following are some suggestions on how to successfully eliminate a lice problem in the home.

1. After the hair has been treated with the prescribed shampoo according to the instructions, all nits should be removed. While the approved treatments kill lice, none are guaranteed to kill all of the eggs (or nits). Consequently, to ensure against reinfestation from surviving eggs, efforts at egg removal are a must. Also, the scalp should be examined for live lice 8 to 10 days after initial treatment and retreated if necessary.

For egg removal, experts advise using a cream rinse on the hair, then stripping out the eggs with a special comb. Or those strands of hair may be simply cut off. The removal of all nits also helps school personnel to be more accurate in judging reinfestation. An inordinate amount of school time is spent in checking the status of the nits. Therefore, if there are no nits we are assured there are no lice.

2. It is important that the person put on clean clothing and use fresh bedding, towels and linens following treatment. Every single item of personal belongings must be thoroughly cleaned in soap and hot water. This includes combs, brushes, hair ribbons, barrettes, caps, jackets, pajamas and all clothing. Hair care items that cannot be washed, such as hair dryers, curling irons, etc., should be sprayed with a lice control insecticide. Bed linens, blankets, towels and stuffed toys should also be thoroughly cleaned in soap and hot water.

Other clothes that have been worn, such as sweaters and coats, should be either machine-washed on the hot cycle, dry cleaned, ironed with a hot iron, put through the hot cycle of a dryer, or sprayed with a lice control insecticide.

3. Every room that the infested person has been in must be thoroughly vacuumed or scrubbed. All upholstered furniture and car interiors should have the same treatment.
4. Anything that cannot be cleaned should be enclosed in a plastic bag and sealed for 30 days.

Remember: Lice infestations are not a sign of personal uncleanliness, slovenly housekeeping, or poverty. In fact, some of the nicest, cleanest kids get head lice, usually from their nice, clean schoolmates.