

Lice: A Survival Guide

Lice is a very common childhood nuisance. If your child has been diagnosed with head lice don't despair- take a deep breath, clear your calendar for the day, and read on:

Treatment of head lice is a two-pronged approach, you need to treat the live lice, and remove the eggs, or nits, that cling to the hair shaft. Unfortunately there is significant resistance to over-the-counter lice treatments in our area, thus we recommend a secondary form of treatment as well if this is your second bout, or you want to be ultra-cautious.

You may want to review an excellent video prior to treatment; go to headliceinfo.com and watch "Head Lice to Dead Lice." Then proceed:

1. Examine the whole family carefully for lice and nits. Even just one nit indicates infestation.
2. Shampoo all those affected (or just do the whole family) with NIX- available over-the-counter and can be effective at killing both lice and eggs. Alternatively you can try Lice Free!, a sodium chloride treatment that does not contain pesticides but will only kill live lice. Rinse with a dilute white vinegar solution, this will help loosen the protein that holds the nits in place on the hair shaft.
3. Comb out any nits you may see. It may be worthwhile to invest in a fine, metal nit comb. This work is tedious, but a thorough removal of nits will ensure no recurrence.
4. Change pillowcases and sheets before treatment and one day following.
5. Use a vacuum and lint roller on couches, chairs, car seats.
6. Any items that have come in contact with your child's head should be washed on a hot cycle and dried on high heat OR dry cleaned OR put away in a bag for two weeks (i.e. stuffed animals.) Lice cannot live off of a live host.
7. Check your child's hair daily for one week, then every other day for another week. Repeat treatment at one week if you continue to find new nits, and/or continue on to the "5-step olive oil battle plan" (based on smothering head lice with olive oil) at HeadLiceInfo.com.
8. Children may return to school once they have been treated and are free of live lice. Remaining nits should be removed as seen, but many represent dead eggs that were missed at the first comb-thru and do not pose a risk to other children. If you find live lice after treatment, you will need to retreat prior to sending your child back to class.