

SAY GOODBYE TO HEAD LICE



A Guide to Identifying, Treating and Preventing the Spread of Head Lice

Guidelines Recommended by:

East Shore District Health Department
14 Business Park Drive Branford, CT 06405
203-481-4233
ESDHD.ORG

*Bringing Good Health to the towns of Branford,
East Haven, and North Branford*



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Identifying Head Lice

What do head lice look like?

Though very small, head lice can be seen by the human eye. They live in human hair, draw blood from the skin, and lay eggs (called nits) on the hair shaft. The nits may be found less than 1/2 inch from the scalp and most often on hair at the back of the head in the neck region. Children may complain of “feeling something crawling in their hair” or complain of an itchy head.



Nit (lice egg) on a hair shaft



Is your child at risk? Yes. Today, kids can be placed into two groups: Those with head lice and those at risk for getting head lice. Head lice will spread as long as children play together. They are found in all social classes and in all countries. Children in child care, preschools, grade or middle schools are most at risk. Head lice are NOT a sign of being dirty.

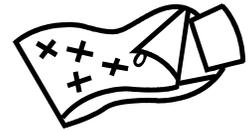
Head Lice Facts

- ⇒ Head lice require the warm, humid environment of the human scalp for survival.
- ⇒ They feed frequently and quickly become dehydrated if they fall off their host.
- ⇒ Eggs removed from the human head won't hatch at room temperature.
- ⇒ While not impossible, it is extremely unusual for someone to become infested from lice or eggs that fall off a host.
- ⇒ Studies indicate head-to-head contact is primarily how head lice spread from one person to another.

Prevent the Spread of Head Lice:

To Reduce the risk of your child catching head lice, teach your children...

- ◆ Do not share items that touch their body with other children such as combs, brushes, towels and toiletry items
- ◆ Do not to share hats and hair accessories such as barrettes and hair ties and bandannas
- ◆ Do not share helmets, headphones, and other items that touch your hair
- ◆ Minimize the hugging and head to head whispering with other children
- ◆ Always bring your own pillows, sleeping bags, or sheets to a sleepover.



Home Remedies: Truth or Fiction?

Some home remedies include cooking oil, mayonnaise, vinegar and other combinations. Studies have shown lice can survive in hair covered with olive oil, mayonnaise and even petroleum jelly—even when it is left on the hair overnight.

Lice don't drown easily. Research has shown lice can survive when immersed in water for 14 hours at 86-98 degrees F.

Shampooing with ordinary shampoo won't kill lice; lice can survive through two consecutive shampooing, even when the hair is not rinsed for an hour after the second shampooing.

Treat Your Household for Head Lice

- ☑ Call your child's school, care provider and friends and let them know to check other children.
- ☑ Use the 14-day treatment process.
- ☑ Look for lice on all members of your household. Treat those who need it
- ☑ Only ordinary house cleaning, vacuuming, and laundry are needed.
- * **Machine wash** clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, etc., in hot water and dry at least 20 minutes on hot cycle in dryer — including materials used in treatment process.
- * **Vacuum everywhere** . Lice do not hide in the carpet or crevices of your furniture. They require body heat to survive. Vacuum the carpet/rugs, floors, furniture, car seats, and any other item or area that has been in contact with the head. What you are trying to do is pick up hairs that might have eggs on them and any lice that might have hatched out from fallen hairs. You will also be vacuuming up any lice that might have accidentally fallen off the person's head.
- * No special effort or sprays are needed to clean your home. Only dead or dying lice are found on clothing, bedding, or furniture. Evidence shows that **lice sprays and bombs are not effective in killing lice or nits**. They only put poisons into the air and on the surfaces of your furniture.
- ☑ Store items like stuffed animals and pillows that can't be laundered in plastic bags for two weeks (or dry clean).
- ☑ Soak combs and brushes in hot water (130°F) for 15 minutes or in bleach water (1/4 cup bleach to 1 quart of water) for one hour.

If you have additional questions, please contact your child's school nurse or family physician.

What can you do?

Parents are the key to looking for and treating head lice!

The East Shore District Health Department advises parents to spend several minutes each week on each child carefully looking for head lice or nits.

If you suspect your child has lice but are having difficulty seeing or identifying them, take your child to the pediatrician or school nurse to confirm.

When the school nurse calls you to say **your** child has head lice or if you find them while examining your child, Follow the steps below:

Don't panic . Take a deep breath. You can deal with this!

- ☑ Contact the child's school if they haven't contacted you.
- ☑ Call the parents of your child's close friends and playmates
- ☑ Follow the 14-day Regimen found on pages 4 and 5
- ☑ **Check all family members carefully (even adults can get head lice!)**
- ☑ **Launder everything** that can be laundered that has been in contact with your child
- ☑ **Vacuum everywhere** . Vacuum the carpet/rugs, floors, furniture, car seats, and any other item or area that has been in contact with the head.
- ☑ **Soak combs and brushes** in hot water (130°F) for 15 minutes or in bleach water (1/4 cup bleach to 1 quart of water) for one hour.
- ☑ Only treat your child for head lice if they actually have head lice.

14 Day Treatment for Head Lice:

The Health Department recommends a 14-day treatment procedure using over-the-counter products. They are safe and not costly.

First, mark on your calendar the date you saw head lice to help you keep track of treatment.

On Day 1 and 8: Wash hair with over-the-counter medicated head-lice shampoo. **Read and follow all directions on the shampoo.** Apply hair conditioner or olive oil to make the hair slippery. **COMB*** the hair the entire length from the scalp to end of hair with a metal Nit Comb.

Days 2 and 3/ 9 and 10: Wash the hair using your regular shampoo. Rinse. Apply hair conditioner to make the hair slippery. **COMB*** the hair the entire length from the scalp to end of hair with a metal Nit Comb.

Day 4—7 and 11—14 Run the Nit Comb the entire length of the dry hair. If you find a Nit simply clip that single hair with scissors and throw the hair away.

*Nits are **not** removed or killed by the medicated shampoo. You must take the time to comb out nits as completely as possible!! Don't skip this important step!

| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 7 |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Date _____ Use medicated Shampoo, Rinse, Put in conditioner or olive oil and Comb, and then Rinse Vacuum and launder | Use Regular Shampoo, Put in conditioner and Comb, and then Rinse | Use Regular Shampoo, Put in conditioner and Comb, and then Rinse | Nit pick dry clean hair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 14 |
| Date _____ Use medicated Shampoo, Rinse, Put in conditioner or olive oil and Comb, and then Rinse | Use Regular Shampoo, Put in conditioner and Comb, and then Rinse | Use Regular Shampoo, Put in conditioner and Comb, and then Rinse | Nit pick dry clean hair |

Proper Combing Technique

Getting ready--

You Will Need:

Fine-toothed Nit Comb designed for nit removal. A metal comb is less flexible than plastic ones and is more effective at removing nits.

Wide bowl of water with a squirt of dishwashing liquid

A large towel to place around the child's shoulders during combing

Box of facial tissue

Pins or clips to keep hair separated

A plastic trash bag

Prepare the hair by covering the hair with conditioner to keep the hair wet so combing is easier. This also slows down any louse that has survived the medicated shampoo. Remove tangles with a regular hair comb

Give your child a hand held activity or let them watch TV or a movie to keep them occupied while you comb.

Combing is essential to removing the lice not killed by lice products and the nits which lice shampoo does not kill.

Combing should be done in a **well-lighted area**.

Separate a mass of hair about the width of the **metal lice comb**. It is important to separate the hair into small sections so you can more easily see lice and nits.

Hold the mass of hair with one hand. Insert the lice comb as close to the scalp as possible and gently pull the comb slowly through the hair several times. Check the hair carefully. **Comb one section at a time** and check each section again. **Twist the hair and pin it up against the head.**

Dip the comb in the soapy water and use the tissue to remove lice and debris. Make sure the comb is clean before you use it on the hair again. Continue combing.

COMB hair at least 20 minutes.

COMB all of hair.

Throw wiping tissues away into a plastic bag