

Applying head lice treatment tips

1. Read the instructions on the head lice treatment bottle. Follow every step carefully.
2. Protect the skin by covering shoulders with a towel.
3. Cover the hair from scalp to ends with treatment. Longer hair might need more treatment to cover all hair.
4. Comb treatment through the hair making sure all hair is fully covered.
5. Follow the instructions for how long to leave the treatment in the hair. Do not wash the treatment off too early or leave it on too long.
6. Rinse the hair over a sink (not by bathing or showering). Avoid getting head lice treatment on other parts of the body.

Natural head lice treatments

There is very little proof to show that any “home remedy” works to get rid of lice.

Natural head lice treatments contain essential oils (e.g. tea tree oil), salts or other natural ingredients. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before using essential oil treatments. Some concentrations and ingredients may be harmful for some people.

Some people also use things such as petroleum jelly, margarine, peanut butter, hair gel, mayonnaise, or cooking oils (e.g. olive, corn, canola). These do not kill lice.

What else should I do?

Combs, brushes and hats should be washed in hot soapy water and dried.

Coats, bedding and clothing used by the person with head lice should be washed in hot soapy water and dried in the dryer using high heat for at least 20 minutes.

Items that cannot be washed should be ironed, dry cleaned, or sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks.

Surfaces where the person may have rested their head (e.g. rugs, sofas, chairs, throw pillow, beds, car interior) should be vacuumed.



Do not use bug spray.

Why is treatment not working?

The directions on the treatment were not followed correctly.

Some lice were not killed by the treatment.

A second treatment was not used to kill newly hatched nits. Hair must be treated again 7-10 days after the first treatment.

“Nit-picking” was not done daily until no nits or lice were seen for two weeks.

They are new lice from contact with someone who has head lice (e.g. classmate or family member).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Talk to a doctor and/or pharmacist.

Speak to an administrator at your child’s school or daycare about their policy for head lice.

Listen to the Region of Waterloo Public Health head lice information message 519-575-4400 ext. 2286.

Head Lice

What you need to know



What are head lice?

Head lice are small, wingless insects. They live on the hair of humans. They do not live on animals.

Head lice are very common, particularly in school-aged children. Lice will live on any head and don’t care whether the hair is clean or dirty.

Lice cannot live off the head as they need the warmth and blood supply to live.

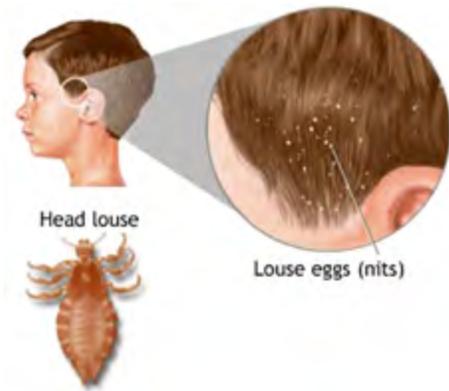
They are not a health risk. Anyone can get head lice.

Signs of head lice

- No signs.
- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair.
- Itchiness from lice bites.
- Severe scratching which may lead to infection.

How do I know it is head lice?

Adult lice are tan to grayish in colour, 2-4 mm long and have 6 legs. They can crawl quickly from head to head. Lice lay eggs called nits.

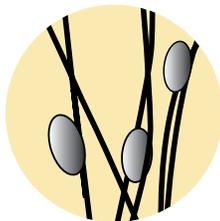


Nits stick to the hair shaft and are often found behind the ears and at the back of the neck.

They may look like dandruff or hairspray.

They are tiny, oval, grayish-white eggs that hatch after 7- 10 days into a "nymph."

Nymphs grow into adult lice in 10 days. Live lice can only live off the head for 1-2 days.



How do head lice spread?

Lice spread by:

- hair-to-hair contact with someone who has head lice.
- sharing personal items (e.g. comb, brush, hat, scarf, coat, helmet, towel, pillow) that have touched the hair of someone who has head lice.

Preventing spread of head lice

Avoid hair-to-hair contact with people.

Tie back long hair in a braid or ponytail.

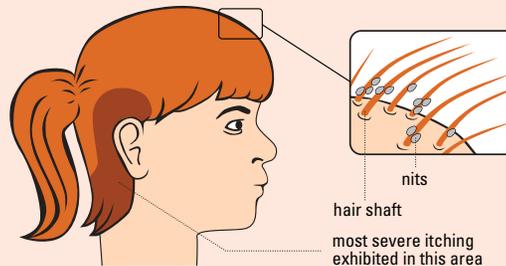
Do not share clothing e.g. hair ribbons, hats, scarves, coats, and sports uniforms.

Place hats and scarves in coat sleeves or school bags/backpacks.

Do not share combs, brushes or towels.

Do not use items (e.g. bed, pillow, couch, carpet, stuffed animals) that have recently been in contact with a person who has head lice.

Sleep in separate beds at sleep-over parties.



Getting Rid of Head Lice

PICKING OUT ALL NITS IS KEY TO SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT.

To "nit-pick" you will need:

- bright light and/or magnifying glass
- fine tooth comb or nit comb.
- box of facial tissue.
- one large towel.
- bowl of warm water with a small amount of dish soap.
- bobby pins or hair clips.



How to "nit-pick"

- Put the towel around the shoulders.
- To distract a child, have them watch TV, play a video game, do puzzles, or read while you nit-pick.
- Comb the hair to remove tangles. You may wish to wet the hair.
- Part and separate hair into sections; clip hair not being looked at.
- Place the nit comb at the scalp and pull it through the length of hair several times. This will help you see the nits on the hair.
- When you find a nit, slide it off the hair shaft using your thumbnail and first finger.
- Wipe nits or dead lice onto the tissue.
- Wash the comb in soapy water after combing through each hair section.
- Twist hair into a curl and pin it flat against the head when finished looking at the section.
- Check the whole head. Look closely behind ears and at the back of the neck.
- Flush used tissue down the toilet.



How to treat head lice

If you see live (crawling) lice, talk to a doctor or pharmacist about how to treat. Do not use lice treatments for pets on humans.



Drug stores sell medicated head lice treatments. You do not need a prescription from a doctor.

Some head lice treatments (e.g. shampoos and crème rinses) contain a medicine called an insecticide. Insecticides kill live lice and some nits.