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What to do if your child comes home with head lice

Anyone can get head lice. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or shared objects (combs, towels, hats, etc.) *It has nothing to do with cleanliness and does not reflect poorly on you as a parent.* The problem is easily managed. Just follow the instructions below.

- 1 Check every member of the family**
Look for tiny white nits (eggs) on hair shafts, near the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Head lice are small grayish-white insects without wings that do not jump or fly. Every person living in the home with head lice or nits (eggs) must be treated.
- 2 Use an effective head lice treatment.**
Several products are available without a prescription (RID, NIX, A-200 Pyrinate, Cuprex, Triple-X, etc.) or check with your doctor who may prescribe a special medicated liquid called Kwell. If used as directed, the above-mentioned products will be very effective in killing head lice. **FOR CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS OF AGE, ALWAYS CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE USING ANY PRODUCT.**
- 3 Remove all nits.**
Gently comb the child's hair with a special fine tooth nit removal comb (metal fine tooth combs can be purchased from a beauty supply store). Because no shampoo product kills all the nits (eggs), it is very important to remove all traces of the nits (eggs) to prevent reinfestation. You may have to use your fingers to remove all the nits (eggs). **ALL LICE AND NITS MUST BE REMOVED FROM YOUR CHILD'S HAIR BEFORE HE/SHE MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL.**
- 4 Wash clothes, bed linens, and towels.**
Use hot water and dry on hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items such as hats, caps, and stuffed animals that are not machine washable must be dry cleaned or stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic bag.
- 5 Soak combs, brushes, etc. in hot water.**
The hotter the better, but at least at 140 °F. Items should be allowed to soak for 10-15 minutes. You can also soak the items in the shampoo product for 10-15 minutes or use a solution of 1 part household bleach to 10 parts water and soak for 10-15 minutes.
- 6 Vacuum everywhere.**
To make sure the rest of your home is louse free, you should vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, and upholstered furniture.

Remember- **Head lice cannot survive without a human host. They cannot jump or fly.** They cannot survive on family pets. Choose an effective treatment, use as directed, and perform the steps listed above to eliminate head lice from your home and help prevent their spread in our schools and community.

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