



HEAD LICE

Treat the infested child: Requires using an over-the-counter or prescription medication.

- 1) Before applying treatment, it may be helpful to remove clothing that can become wet or stained during treatment.
- 2) Apply lice medicine, also called pediculicide, according to the instructions contained in the box or printed on the label. If the infested person has very long hair (longer than shoulder length), it may be necessary to use a second bottle. Pay special attention to instructions on the label or in the box regarding how long the medication should be left on the hair and how it should be washed out.

WARNING: Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not rewash the hair for 1-2 days after the lice medicine is removed.

- 3) Have the infested person put on clean clothing after treatment.
- 4) If a few live lice are still found 8-12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. The medicine may take longer to kill all the lice. Comb dead and any remaining live lice out of the hair using a fine-toothed nit comb.
- 5) If, after 8-12 hours of treatment, no dead lice are found and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with your health care provider; a different pediculicide may be necessary.
- 6) Nit (head lice egg) combs, often found in lice medicine packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.
- 7) After treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days may decrease the chance of self-reinfestation. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.
- 8) For some drugs, retreatment is recommended routinely 7-9 days after the first treatment, and for for others only if crawling lice are seen during this period.

Supplemental measures: Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. Spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid reinfestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing. Follow these steps to help avoid re-infestation by lice that have recently fallen off the hair or crawled onto clothing or furniture.

- 1) Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- 2) Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- 3) Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, the risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a rug or carpet or furniture is very small.