

## Lice Facts and Tips

- ☞ Anyone can get lice. It can be hard work to get rid of them.
- ☞ Head-to-head contact is the most common way lice are spread.
- ☞ Lice don't jump or fly, but they are fast crawlers. Pets do not carry lice.
- ☞ An itchy scalp is the most common symptom and may continue for a while after treatment.
- ☞ Treating with oil will suffocate most lice, but you **MUST** physically remove the nits by combing or picking them out.
- ☞ Lice need human blood to survive. They'll die within 48 hours if they can't get it.
- ☞ It takes nits about 6 days to hatch, so putting items such as stuffed toys in plastic bags for 10-14 days should kill remaining lice.
- ☞ Notify people who may be affected. Children should be nit-free before returning to school or childcare.



Adult louse



Louse eggs are tightly cemented to the hair shaft

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Some information from the Spokane Regional Health District at [www.srhd.org](http://www.srhd.org), "Head Lice to Dead Lice", © Sawyer Mac Productions, and the Harvard School of Public Health

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## Head Lice



## How to get rid of them safely

## OH NO! MY KID HAS HEAD LICE!

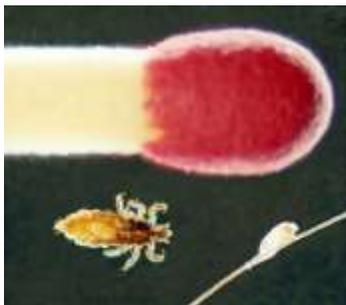
After you get over the initial shock, it's important to realize several things: **1)** head lice prefer nice, clean heads – it is NOT a sign of poor hygiene; **2)** Blood is lice's only source of nourishment; **3)** Head lice are building a tolerance to chemicals (pesticides) used to kill them; **4)** It may not be good to put these pesticides on your children.

So what is a safer alternative to dangerous chemicals?

## Examine

Examine everyone in the household for lice or nits (lice eggs). Separate the hair strands carefully. Nits are small (smaller than a pin head – see photos below), white to brown, oval-shaped eggs that are glued to the hair shaft near the scalp. Nits are more easily seen than adult lice because lice crawl quickly. They do not jump or fly.

First check the base of the hair around the ears and across the back of the neck. Then carefully check the rest of the head.



Adult louse (left) and nit on hair shaft (right) compared to a match head

## Treat

Treat only those household members who have head lice. Treat with olive oil or vegetable oil. Inexpensive oil is fine. Use only food grade oils, not auto oils. Lab tests at the Harvard School of Public Health have shown that active lice that are immersed in olive or vegetable oils are smothered and killed after 2 hours.

Dress in old clothes to avoid oily stains. Put a paper towel around the child's neck and sit him/her in a high seat over the sink. Slowly saturate the hair with the oil and rub it in well. Cover the hair with a shower cap for at least 2 hours.



Using a nit comb (which can be purchased at any drugstore), comb through the hair in one-inch sections, checking for and trying to remove any nits that are stuck to the hair. The hair shaft can also be clipped off between the scalp and the nit.

After combing the hair well, shampoo the oil out, first using Dawn dishwashing liquid, then using shampoo. Follow with conditioner.

Launder pillow cases, pajamas, towels, coats, hats, scarves in hot water.

Adult lice are killed in 5 minutes and eggs are killed in 10 minutes in 125° F water. If the item can't be laundered, put it in a hot dryer. For upholstery, use a hot blow dryer to heat treat surfaces. You can also put items in the freezer for 2 weeks.

Vacuum couches, chairs, car seats, carpets, EVERY DAY for at least 3 weeks.

Soak combs, brushes, hair accessories in hot water for 20 minutes. Tell children not to use other's hats, helmets, caps, combs, brushes or hair accessories.

## Repeat

**This procedure must be repeated EVERY four days for at least 21 days.** Nits hatch in 7-10 days and develop into adults in another 7-10 days. As adults they can lay up to 100 eggs, so it is important to treat on a very regimented schedule to break this cycle. See calendar below.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Day 1	2 Day 2	3	4	5 Day 5	6	7
8	9 Day 9	10	11	12	13 Day 13	14
15	16	17 Day 17	18	19	20	21 Day 21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				