

cet★pta

A Parent Guidebook: Getting Rid of Head Lice



A Parent Guidebook: Getting Rid of Head Lice

THE ISSUE:

1. Head lice have become constant and widespread.
2. Head lice disturb the classroom, your home, and your life.
3. There is inconsistent information about treatment and prevention.

THE SOLUTION:

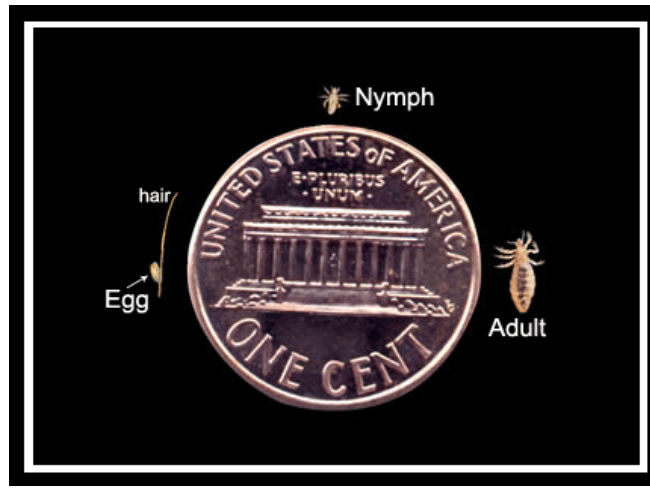
A **Guidebook** with everything you need:

1. Myths vs. Facts
2. Expert Advice for prevention and treatment
3. Tips from Parents -- Hear from those who have been through this!
4. Resources
 - a. Contact information for professional lice technicians
 - b. Websites with detailed information
 - c. Products recommended, and where to buy them.
 - d. Contact information of Parents who are willing to help.

**Lice is highly contagious and won't go away unless
we all work together to get rid of it!**

Section I

Head Lice: Myths vs. Facts



Myth #1: Lice like dirty hair.

Fact #1: Lice love clean hair.

Myth #2: Lice jump and fly.

Fact #2: Lice crawl and move around very quickly, but they do not jump or fly.

Myth #3: Special shampoos (i.e., Rid/Nix/Organic Shampoo) kill lice.

Fact #3: Unfortunately, lice and their eggs have become resistant to these products, so no shampoo is 100% effective. Thus, a shampoo treatment along with consistent combing is critical to achieving complete, effective treatment. Newer, natural shampoos formulated with natural oils are considered safer as they do not expose the head to toxins.

Myth #4: One treatment of lice-ridding shampoo gets rid of the problem.

Fact #4: After treating with a lice shampoo, you must continue to comb, comb, comb for 10 to 14 days. Any eggs left in the head can hatch within 7 to 12 days, starting the process again. It is the combing that gets rid of the infestation.

Myth #5: Lice can be drowned.

Fact #5: Lice need to be suffocated or combed out. When wet, lice cling to the hair shaft and shut down their respiratory systems, pretending to be dead.

Section I

Head Lice: Myths vs. Facts, Cont.

Myth #6: Any comb can be used to comb out the lice.

Fact #6: The comb must have 1¾- to 2-inch-long, metal teeth, which must be extremely close together.

Myth #7: Lice occur only in females, and young children.

Fact #7: Lice can affect anyone, young or old, male or female. Lice appear to occur more often in females because lice can attach more easily to longer hair. Lice also occur frequently in young children, because they often have head-to-head contact.

Myth #8: You can get lice from your pet.

Fact #8: Lice cannot thrive on household pets.

Section II Expert Advice

This section is provided by Dale Longworth, a professional lice technician and owner of Lice Off, Inc., in Dobbs Ferry, NY. Her information and instructional video for lice removal can be found at her website: www.liceoffinc.com. More contact information for Dale is in the Resources section.

A. Information on Head Lice

Outbreaks of head lice have become part of our society, and part of raising children today. It is highly contagious, and can be difficult, at times, to prevent. But, if every parent/caregiver assumes the responsibility to check their child's head, and screen the entire family often, these human parasites can be detected early and managed with little difficulty.

The following **overview** should be helpful in identifying, avoiding, and controlling head lice.

1. Head lice are small insects about the size of a sesame seed. Diagnosis is often made on the basis of finding lice eggs. Eggs are tiny, grayish white, tan or brown ovals that attach very tightly to hair shafts in the hair. These eggs cannot wash off or be blown away. It takes some effort to remove them from the hair shaft, and when removed by hand or by combing out, they turn brown. Eggs may be found throughout the hair, but often are seen at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and at the crown of the head.

Section II Expert Advice, cont.

2. The eggs are what the lice bug lays, and can lay up to 3 to 10 eggs a day. The nits are the shells that the bug leaves on the hair shaft when hatched. An egg can hatch within 7 to 12 days, and then develop into an adult bug within another 7 to 12 days. Once it mates with another adult bug, it can then lay more eggs (sometimes 100 or more eggs in a 14 day cycle). The lice bug can live up to 30 days.
3. Head lice can move and crawl quickly. They **do not** jump or fly.
4. The lice bug feeds from the protein in the blood on the scalp several times a day.
5. Keep an eye open for head lice signs, such as scratching and complaints of an itchy scalp. However, not everyone will necessarily itch. Red dot bite marks or scratch marks can sometimes be seen on the scalp, behind the ears, and neck.
6. Lice can't be drowned. They need to be suffocated or combed out. Certain shampoos, like Rid/Nix/Organic Shampoo, are available, but unfortunately, they are not 100 % effective. Lice and their eggs have become resistant to many of these products.
7. One treatment with a lice-ridding shampoo does not guarantee that you have gotten rid of the lice and/or their eggs. Any eggs that remain on the hair can hatch within 7 to 12 days, starting the cycle again. Therefore, it is imperative that after you treat with a lice shampoo, you continue to **comb, comb, comb** for 14 days with the conditioner/baking soda regimen explained in Section C. **It is the combing that gets rid of the infestation, even if you use the strong treatments.** Dead eggs and nits will remain glued to the hair, and the constant combing will remove them also.
8. Natural things, like mayonnaise and olive oil, put on the head and covered by a swim or shower cap are also effective for lice treatment. The cap needs to be tight so that no air leaks in, and must stay on the head for 6 hours. However, you need to do that process for about 3 to 7 days, and still continue to comb out with conditioner/baking soda to reach that 10-14 day cycle.
9. Head lice can affect anyone, young or old, male or female.
10. Head lice cannot thrive on household pets.

B. Prevention of Lice

1. Even after combing for 14 days, you should continuously check the child's head, or comb out once a week, as a preventive method.

Section II
Expert Advice, cont.

2. The comb you buy is very important because that will get rid of the bugs, eggs and nits. The comb must have 1¾- to 2-inch-long, metal teeth, which are extremely close together.
3. There are also leave-in conditioner sprays, conditioners and hair sprays, which contain tea tree oil and rosemary oil – oils that are believed to be natural repellents. After applying the conditioner and/or hair spray to the hair, comb or brush the hair so the ingredients are throughout the head, from scalp to ends. These are used as preventive methods. You can also buy tea tree oil in a health food store and put some drops behind the ears, the nape of the neck and the wrists. Or, you can add 2 to 3 capfuls of tea tree oil to your regular shampoo and have the child use it when they wash their hair. Again, this is a preventive method, and it may not be 100% effective.
4. Long hair should be worn up and off the shoulders, so it is less likely to come in contact with someone else's hair or clothing.
5. Hair sprays and gels can be used on the hair as a deterrent. Lice love clean hair.
6. Make sure your child knows not to share brushes, combs, hair accessories, hats, headphones, helmets, pillows, and any other articles that can transmit head lice.
7. Teach your child to avoid head-to-head contact.
8. **If your child does contract head lice, contact the school nurse, your child's friends and family that have been associated with them 14 days prior to discovering the head lice. Don't forget to contact other programs that your child attends (i.e., sports teams, dance class, religious school, etc.). Acquiring head lice is not a sign of poor hygiene, and it should not be a stigma to the child or embarrassment to parents. It is almost as contagious as a cold, and most people appreciate when they get a call about head lice. If your child does come in contact with someone with head lice, check your child's hair every other day for 14 days, to see if you see any eggs on the hair shaft.**
9. If you are uncertain whether your child has lice, you can consult the school nurse, your pediatrician, or a lice professional.
10. Although lice are not a health risk, they are a nuisance that can impact a family in many stressful ways.

Section II
Expert Advice, cont.

C. Treatment of Lice: Step-by Step Instructions for Combing Out, and More

1. Wet the hair with warm water. Or, if there are a lot of eggs and the child's head is heavily infested, a 50:50 mixture of white vinegar and warm water can be used, which will loosen the glue of the egg (or nit). Pour the water and vinegar over the head.
2. After making sure all the knots are out of the hair, liberally apply Pantene Conditioner to the head, and massage it throughout the hair.
3. Using a metal lice comb, with 2-inch teeth, start combing on one side, working your way to the middle and then to the other side. Comb from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the hair. Make sure you take a lot of hair into the comb in order for it to pull out the eggs. Do not take little pieces of hair into the comb. Examine the comb and see if there are any lice or eggs. Eggs will frequently get stuck between the tines and must be removed. Comb 1x, then 2x making sure you wipe the conditioner off the comb with a paper towel. Look at the paper towel. If you see brown oval specks or larger, then you are seeing lice or their eggs (nits). Comb the same spot numerous times. Go over the entire scalp this way, making sure that you cover every single millimeter.
4. After combing for about 5 to 10 minutes or when all the knots are out of the hair, put a little baking soda in a small bowl and dip the comb into it, and then start combing into the hair. You can dip the comb into the baking soda every other time. This makes the hair coarser, and allows for easier removal of any hidden eggs/nits or bugs. If you feel the hair is getting dry, you can always re-wet the hair slightly, and add some more conditioner.
5. When combing after the initial detection of lice, you should comb the affected head for at least 1 hour, or until the hair becomes clean and free of lice. Then after the 1st initial combing process, you should be combing the child/children out for only 15 to 30 minutes with the conditioner treatment and baking soda for 10 to 14 days.

Note: Lice do not go away in one day. **COMBING, COMBING, COMBING for 14 days** is an essential part in breaking the lice life cycle. If you shorten that time, you could find your child becoming reinfested. The combing removes the eggs, the nits that hatch, and any nymphs (baby bugs) before they can reproduce.

6. When you complete the comb out process, rinse the hair with warm water, or wash the hair out with shampoo. Sleeping with the conditioner does not kill lice.

Section II Expert Advice, cont.

7. After each comb-out, boil the lice comb for 3 minutes, or put it in a bowl with rubbing alcohol. Clean the teeth of the comb with an old toothbrush.
8. In addition to combing, you can also have the child sleep with olive oil; some say it suffocates the eggs and bugs. However, the oil should be applied to the head for only 3 to 7 days after discovering the child has lice. Usually the oil is used when there is a high infestation of the head.
9. Vacuum. This prevents lice from spreading from person to person. Hairs with eggs/nits fall off of people and vacuuming picks them up. Vacuum floors and furniture, especially cloth couches, if your child sits on them for the first 24 hours. The lice bug needs a host, so they will not live more than 24 to 36 hours after they have left a head.
10. Put things in the dryer that you don't have to wash (i.e., bedding, blankets, comforters, stuffed animals, coats, hats, backpacks), for 20 minutes on high heat. You can also bag stuffed animals for 2 to 4 days. If you continue to find live lice bugs after a day or so of combing, you can continue to run the bedding through the dryer for 20 minutes for 4 days.
11. The pesticide lice sprays are not recommended because they can be harmful to family members and pets.
12. The eggs are not contagious; it is the lice bug that is contagious because it travels from head to head.
13. **Remember the head that has lice is the most important thing, not the house.**

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Section III Parent Tips

The following are quotes from parents in the CET community who have dealt with head lice and lived to tell about it!

1. **Take a deep breath. Say, OK, I can do this.**
2. Think of the head first, then the house, then the community.
 - a. For the head: Olive oil, soaked into the hair, with a swim cap on as much as possible. Immediately suffocates them.

Section III
Parent Tips, cont.

- b. Then the house: Start bagging anything that may have hairs on it...sheets, towels, robes, dolls, stuffed animals, etc. Don't start washing or drying yet. As long as these items are bagged, you might as well keep them there for 48 hours, wait until the lice are dead, and then start drying (only wash if stuff is actually dirty) to make sure they're really dead. Then vacuum cloth sofas, chairs, floors.
 - c. Back to the head: Use a natural shampoo – loved the peppermint shampoo from Dale. This also kills them. Then, COMB. Then soak head with olive oil again. It keeps suffocating anything that may be left on the hair AND prevents anything from transferring onto another head, and the sofa, etc., so you don't have to keep vacuuming every day! Do this every day if you find a lot of nits or bugs, or every other day, until you find nothing when you comb out. And then, every few days for another week to be sure!
 - d. The community: Please call everyone that your child has come into contact with. You are doing other parents a BIG favor if they catch it quickly in their child's hair. And it helps prevent the constant spreading from classmate to classmate!
3. You have to STICK WITH the combing out. The professional told me every other day is fine, for a week or so after a shampoo treatment to kill the bugs. Then, maybe 2X a week for 2 more weeks. This is in case there is a hatch of a missed nit -- which happens even with a professional! You have to get 'em all, and get'em young before they can lay more eggs.
 4. The VAST majority of the time if you get a recurrence of lice within a few months, it is from missed nits hatching and maturing, not from another head.
 5. Staying on top of it is crucial. It's worth treating lice a full week after the bugs are gone (lice shampoo and combing through) to ensure any leftover lousy eggs don't hatch.
 6. The olive oil has to be done multiple times over a couple of days to really be effective. Lice have spiracles for breathing, which is why water doesn't drown them, so they have to be coated over and over to be totally clogged.
 7. I also stand by Olive Oil. It kills the bugs and smothers the nits and makes your scalp and hair feel great!
 8. Being vigilant for the 14 day cycle is a must, olive oil is great. Run, don't walk, to Carmen's for a REAL lice comb. They cost 10 bucks but are worth it. Do not waste time with the plastic ones or with one designed for combing pet hair. Some parents have purchased the comb "just in case."
 9. At my school, the nurse and lice consultant recommend tea tree oil mixed with an oil. I've been using almond oil, both found at Mrs. Greens.
 10. The most important thing is to continue checking for at least 2 weeks after you are all clean.
 11. Buying a steel comb is worth it-the plastic ones don't work. I googled "niska" and bought one online.

Section III
Parent Tips, cont.

12. Buy a comb BEFORE you ever get lice – all you need is some oil and a comb and you can start treatment, even if you don't have any other products (shampoo, etc.).
13. When combing through the child's hair, I turn on a show, music or book on tape. It makes it easier on both of us.
14. An alternative to boiling clips, brushes, etc. to sterilize them, you can also soak them in rubbing alcohol.
15. I don't have to wash every towel; putting towels in the dryer for 20 minutes works just as well.
16. When you are in the middle of the infestation and treatment, do not remake your child's bed every day. I had my children sleep in sleeping bags on their bare mattresses. Then, in the morning, I would gently fold up the sleeping bag and pillow, run them through the dryer for 20-30 minutes on high heat, vacuum the mattress, and then put the sleeping bag and pillow back on the bed. This cut down on the work during the 2-week cycle.
17. I have tried to teach my children to keep their jackets/coats in their **zipped** backpacks at school to avoid the "pileup" that occurs on those classroom/hallway coat racks.
18. As a preventative measure, consider running your child's coat and backpack through the dryer for 20 minutes on high heat immediately after they get off the bus.
19. I think a good metal comb is key. The terminator comb (for sale on the Fairy Tales website) is really good. It works so much better than the plastic stuff that comes with the poisons.
20. My daughter hated the oil, so we gave up and went to a pro. Best \$\$ I ever spent!
21. LISTERINE is another good treatment on the hair.
22. I have put tree tea oil in my kids shampoo. I have been warned that it brings on puberty. It works in terms of repellent and I use it daily on my feet to prevent cracking and splitting.
23. My friend's doctor informed her that lavender and Tea Tree Oils may cause breast growth in boys. Please see below link <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/jan2007/niehs-31.htm>
24. I don't think there are any PROVEN products that repel lice, but a lot of us really like the FairyTales line. I think Carmen's sells it, too.
25. Talking with a friend who has survived lice is helpful, because it is very stressful for everyone. I'll come to your house and share my combing technique with you, and lend you my comb! Call me!
26. Talk about it! Let others know, warn them if you've been at their house. Let's get through this as a community and support each other!

Section III **Parent Tips, cont.**

27. Preventatively – between the ‘flares’ in classrooms - - I’ve been combing every Saturday night. So far no problems, but if there was one – then I could do a treatment on Sunday before school.
28. During the ‘hot’ periods at the school I was combing out every night. And I spray their hair and shoulders each morning – regardless.
29. Key to prevention – make sure you brush the hair after spraying with a leave-in conditioner -- I had been spraying but not brushing afterwards – so the conditioner is on the hair from scalp to ends! I love BOO Conditioner, smells nice, very light, and makes the hair so soft. And keep hair tied tightly back and up above the shoulders! You want to prevent as much contact with the hair as possible! Then the final “seal” is Fairy Tales hair spray.
30. I’m considering lice infestation a rite of passage, like fevers or ear infections. How’s that for being positive?
31. I like to remember that lice don't kill us, they don't spread disease and they have been around forever. Did you know they found lice on Egyptian mummies!!
32. Just to confirm their place in history... lice is one of the 10 plagues remembered during Passover each spring...
33. It’s that one lone egg left behind that is doing us all in.

Section IV **Resources**

I. Professional Lice Technicians

1. Dale Longworth, Professional Lice Technician
Founder and Owner of Lice Off Inc.
914-424-1367
www.liceoffinc.com
 - Offers on-site, and in-home, head lice removal service. Website includes tutorial video, testimonials and additional information.
2. Melissa Gordon, founder and owner
Happy heads Services, LLC
800-257-6069 or email: Melissa@happyheadsnow.com
www.happyheadsproducts.com
 - Offers in-home head lice removal and nitpicker service. Website includes tutorial video, testimonials and products.

Section IV Resources, cont.

3. Barbara Gips, founder
The Lice Patrol
914-666-LICE
www.thelicepatrol.com
 - Offers in-home head lice and nit removal service. Website includes products, testimonials and other information.

II. Websites

1. www.liceoffinc.com
2. www.happyheadsproducts.com
3. www.headlice.org
4. www.lacetoleather.com/ridlice.html
 - Natural Ways to Get Rid of Lice
5. www.thelicepatrol.com
6. www.licelogic.com

III. Products

1. All-In-One Head Lice Treatment Kit
 - Includes sample sizes of items needed for treatment: 1-natural peppermint shampoo, 3-Pantene conditioners, baking soda, 1-lice comb
 - Sample size of 1-Boo leave-in conditioner, recommended for prevention
 - Available for sale by Dale Longworth, www.liceoffinc.com
2. Fairy Tales
 - www.fairytaleshaicare.com
 - Repel products: shampoo, conditioner, hairspray, and gel
 - Also available for sale at Carmen's hair salon in Croton
3. Boo
 - Leave-in conditioner (spray bottle)
 - Preventive shampoo
 - Available for sale by Dale Longworth, www.liceoffinc.com, www.socozy.com, and www.amazon.com
4. Happy Heads
 - Natural lice-ridding shampoo, and repel products
 - www.happyheadsproducts.com

Section IV
Resources, cont.

5. The LiceMeister Comb
 - The comb endorsed by the National Pediculosis Association
 - Purchase at www.headlice.org for \$9.95, and other online websites
6. Niskka Comb
 - All metal lice comb available on sale online – just google the name
7. Terminator Comb
 - Professional Stainless Steel Louse and Nit comb for Head Lice Treatment, removes nits
 - \$10.95 on Amazon

IV. Parent Support

These parents have had experience with head lice and offer their support to help with any stage of a Lice incident.

Thank You Parents!

1. Joanne V. Jackson, #827-9750, joanneja@verizon.net
2. Lisa Wolland, #271-7595, wollands@msn.com
3. Cathy Deutchman, #261-9463, cdeutchman@mac.com