



CINCINNATI HEALTH DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

HEAD LICE INFORMATION SHEET

Lice are tiny insects about (--) long and are a brownish color. They are difficult to find. Lice do not jump, fly, or stay alive longer than 48 hours off the human head. They move fast and are good at hiding. When checking the hair, you might just see nits. A nit is a louse egg and varies in color from yellowish to white. Nits look like dandruff but can't be knocked off. Head lice attach each nit to a hair shaft with a waterproof cement-like substance. Thus, nits cannot be washed or brushed out of the hair like dandruff. Nits (eggs) take 7-10 days to hatch.

Head lice come from another person who has them. They can be passed by head-to-head contact between children while playing, doing schoolwork, whispering, hugging or during contact sports. They can also be passed by sleeping in the same bed, wearing each other's hats, helmets, earphones, scarves, headbands or bows, or using each other's comb, brush or bath/beach towel. Lice can be spread when clothing touches, such as piling up coats, towels or clothing. Keeping your child's head clean is important, but people can get lice repeatedly if not treated completely or if they continue to have contact with an infected source.

TREATMENT:

1. Check every family member's head. Look for lice or nits. Also, include close relatives, playmates, and frequent visitors to your home. You need to do this with a strong, bright light, preferably daylight.
2. Treat everyone on the same day using a lice shampoo, lice cream rinse, or physician-approved treatment. Some lice products are NIX Cream Rinse, A-200, RID, R&C Shampoo, or a generic brand. You must apply these to dry hair. These products are different so **READ THE LABEL AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS**. Ask the pharmacist if you have any questions. Call your doctor for children under the age of two, pregnant women, or if breastfeeding. Pets do not need to be treated.
3. Use a sink to rinse heads instead of bathtub or shower so medicine doesn't run onto skin or into eyes. If solution does get into eyes, immediately flush with plenty of water.
4. On the same day as treatment, change all bed linens including sheets, pillowcases, blankets, mattress covers, bedspreads, and towels.
5. All clothing, coats, bedding, blankets and towels that have been used in the last three (3) days need to be washed with hot water and dried at a hot setting. Soap does not kill lice or nits.
6. Clothing or bedding that cannot be washed can be dry-cleaned. Or those items can be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for 10 days along with stuffed animals or cloth toys

7. Vacuum upholstered furniture, car seats, mattresses and floors.
8. You do ***not*** need to use lice or insecticide sprays. They may be harmful and possibly not effective.
9. REMOVE NITS FROM ALL FAMILY MEMBERS' HEADS - Use a lice comb or your fingers. Hair should be towel dried so nits will snag easier on the comb. Divide hair into sections as you would a permanent. Start combing at the top of the head. Comb with firm, even moves from the scalp, until each section is free of nits. If nits remain after combing, remove them by running the strand of hair between two fingernails. Look carefully above the ears and around the nape of the neck because these are common infestation sites. Nits should be flushed down the toilet or discarded in a sealed plastic bag. This combing should continue daily for 10-14 days while checking for lice or nits. Be sure you check every layer of hair and remove all nits. If you cannot remove all the nits, you may need to cut the hair shorter. You do not need to shave the head.

There are products that may help loosen the nits. Ask your pharmacist. You can also try vinegar and water rinse. DO NOT USE KEROSENE OR TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

10. Soak combs and brushes in lice killing product for one hour, or in boiling water for a few minutes. LiceMeister combs cannot be boiled, wash in soap and water.
11. Retreat your child using the same product in 8-10 days.
12. **Do not use lice shampoo or cream rinse more than once in one week when your child has lice. After your child gets rid of lice, do not use lice products “just for prevention.”**

NOTE: If you still see live lice in 8-10 days after using the same product twice, call your doctor.

No treatment kills all the nits. Nits must be removed. If they are not removed, they may hatch and you will have to start the whole process over again.