

# Head Lice Treatment

**How can I treat a head lice infestation?** By treating the infested person, any other infested family members, and by cleaning clothing and bedding.

## **Step 1: Treat the infested person/any infested family members**

Requires using an over-the-counter or prescription medication. Follow these treatment steps:

1. Before applying treatment, remove all clothing from the waist up.
2. Apply lice medicine, also called pediculicide (peh-DICK-you-luh-side), according to label instructions. If your child has extra long hair, you may need to use a second bottle. **WARNING:** Do not use a creme rinse or combination shampoo/conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash hair for 1-2 days after treatment.
3. Have the infested person put on clean clothing after treatment.
4. If some live lice are still found 8-12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. Comb dead and remaining live lice out of the hair. The medicine sometimes takes longer to kill the lice.
5. If no dead lice are found 8-12 hours after treatment and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. See your health care provider for a different medication and follow their treatment instructions.
6. A nit comb should be used to remove nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.
7. After treatment, check hair every 2-3 days and use a nit comb to remove any nits or lice you see.
8. Retreat in 7-10 days.
9. Check all treated persons for 2-3 weeks after you think that all lice and nits are gone.

## **Step 2: Treat the household**

1. To kill lice and nits, machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that the infested person touched during the 2 days before treatment. Use the hot water cycle (130o F) to wash clothes. Dry laundry using the hot cycle for at least 20 minutes
2. Dry clean clothing that is not washable, (coats, hats, scarves, etc.) OR
3. Store all clothing, stuffed animals, comforters, etc., that cannot be washed or dry cleaned into a plastic bag and seal for 2 weeks.
4. Soak combs and brushes for 1 hour in rubbing alcohol, Lysol\*, or wash with soap and hot (130o F) water.
5. Vacuum the floor and furniture. Do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled.