

Wet-combing — Wet-combing is a way to remove lice from the hair with careful and repeated combing. Wet the hair and add a lubricant, such as hair conditioner.

It is a good option for treating very young children or if you want to avoid using insecticides. However, wet-combing is time consuming and must be repeated multiple times over a period of a few weeks.



PREVENTING HEAD LICE SPREAD — Adults and children who live with a person diagnosed with lice should be examined for lice and treated if needed. Anyone who sleeps in the same bed should be treated for lice, even if no lice or eggs are found.

School policies differ about who at a school, if anyone, needs to be informed when a child has lice. Some schools have a "no nits" policy that prevents a child from returning until no nits are found. However, most experts believe that children can return to school after one treatment with insecticide or the first wet-combing session.

Clothing, bedding, and towels used within 48 hours before treatment should be washed in hot water and dried in an electric dryer on the hot setting. Dry cleaning is also effective. You can use a vacuum to clean furniture, carpet, and car seats. Items that cannot be washed or vacuumed can be sealed inside a plastic bag for two weeks. Items that the person used more than two days before treatment are not likely to be infested because head lice cannot survive off the body for more than 48 hours.

You do not need to have your home sprayed for lice. Routine cleaning and vacuuming is all that is needed to remove lice.



Head Lice



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HEAD LICE DESCRIPTION — The head louse is a tiny, greyish-white insect. Female head lice typically live for about one month and lay 7 to 10 eggs (called nits) per day. The eggs are attached to the base of a hair, near the scalp. The eggs hatch after about eight days.

After the eggs hatch, the egg cases become easier to see. Since the eggs are firmly attached to the hair, they move away from the scalp as the hair grows. Head lice do not jump or fly, and they cannot spread from person to person by attaching to pets.

Head lice often affect children. Approximately one of every four school aged students in Australia have had head lice. This is because lice are easily spread:

- When children play together
- From articles of clothing on adjacent hooks in classrooms
- On shared combs, headphones, towels, and beds

HEAD LICE SYMPTOMS — Most people with head lice do not have any symptoms. Some people feel itching or skin irritation of the scalp, neck, and ears. This is caused by a reaction to lice saliva, which the lice inject into the skin during feeding.

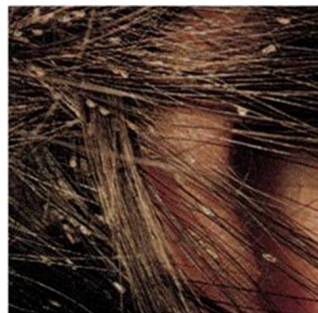


HEAD LICE DIAGNOSIS — Head lice are diagnosed by using a fine-toothed comb to examine the scalp. Special "nit combs" are available for this purpose.

- Before using the fine-toothed comb, use a regular brush or comb to remove tangles. This can be done while the hair is wet or dry. If the hair is wet, apply hair conditioner to make the hair easier to comb.
- Place the fine-toothed comb at the top of the head, touching the scalp. Pull the comb through the hair from roots to ends. After each stroke, carefully examine the comb for lice or eggs.
- Comb the entire head at least twice

Finding eggs (nits) without lice does not necessarily mean that there is an active infestation; nits can be found for months after lice are treated. Because lice lay eggs at the base of the hair shaft, the identification of nits within ¼ inch of the scalp suggests (but does not confirm) an active infestation.

Lice can be more difficult to see than nits since they can move and hide from view. A doctor or nurse can examine the head under a special lamp, which causes nits to glow a pale blue colour. If you are unsure whether your child has lice, make an appointment for your child to be examined before you start treatment.



Finding head lice can be upsetting to children and parents, but it is important to keep the following in mind:

- Lice are not a sign of being dirty or sick
- You can get rid of lice with proper treatment
- There are no serious or long-term health problems associated with lice

HEAD LICE TREATMENT — There are several options for getting rid of head lice, including creams and liquids, combing. It is important to follow directions carefully to be sure that the treatment works.

If you are sure that your child (over age two years) has head lice, you can use a non prescription lice treatment such as KP 24.



Examine family members and close contacts at the same time and treat them if needed. If your child is under age two years, contact the child's doctor or nurse for treatment advice.

Insecticides — KP24 is a substance, usually a lotion that is applied to the scalp to kill lice. There are also other types of treatment that you can get from the chemist without a prescription.