

Managing Head Lice

A Parent's Guide

Parents understandably feel panicked when they hear their child has head lice. If you're like most parents, you're likely to ask, "How could my child get lice?" The fact is that any place children spend time together -- in school, day care, or play groups -- head lice can invade and spread. The problem of head lice is more common than most people think. About 10 million children get head lice each year, so you are not alone.

If you find lice on your child's head, examine other family members to see if lice might have spread to them. To see the lice you might need a strong light and a magnifying glass. Lice are about the size of a sesame seed and usually gather at the warmest points of the head -- at the center-line of the crown, the nape of the neck, and behind the ears. Lice eggs (also called nits) are tan or white and stick to individual hairs. Lice sometimes cause itching and head scratching, but a sure sign is finding nits.

1. KILL THE LICE

Lice killing shampoos, available at your local pharmacy, will kill the lice but not all of the eggs. A second treatment is necessary in 7 to 10 days to kill any newly hatched nits. (Do not use any lice killing product if scalp is cut or scratched.) Since lice killing shampoos do nothing to remove the nits, manual removal is necessary. CLEAR™ Total Lice Elimination System comes with a fast acting lice killing shampoo and an enzymatic lice egg remover to help remove the nits. It is important to carefully follow the instructions that come inside the box.



2. REMOVE THE NITS

Nit removal can be the most difficult chore and is crucial to the successful elimination of head lice. It is the only objective method a school has to determine if a child has been properly treated. Most schools require total nit removal to demonstrate completion. You need a nit-free head to monitor for potential reinfestation. CLEAR, an enzymatic lice egg remover, will help loosen nits for easier comb out. An extra fine nit comb and detailed instructions come in each box. CLEAR® Lice Egg Remover can help you get the nits out no matter which lice killing product you use.



3. CLEAN THE ENVIRONMENT

Personal items, such as clothes, sheets, towels, etc., should be machine washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot water (130° for 15 minutes). Hats, stuffed animals, etc. that can't be washed should be sealed in plastic bags for 2 weeks or dry cleaned. And all rooms, furniture and car seats should be vacuumed. Vacuuming will be as effective and safer than using pesticide sprays. Remember to check your child's head regularly to be sure there are no nits present.

