



## Ways to Treat and Prevent Lice

**Treatment!** Requires using an Over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication. Follow these treatment steps:

1. Before applying treatment, it may be helpful to remove clothing that can become wet or stained during treatment.
2. Apply lice medicine, also called pediculicide, according to the instructions contained in the box or printed on the label. If the infested person has very long hair (longer than shoulder length), it may be necessary to use a second bottle. Pay special attention to instructions on the label or in the box regarding how long the medication should be left on the hair and how it should be washed out.

***WARNING:***

*Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash the hair for 1-2 days after the lice medicine is removed.*

3. Have the child put on clean clothing after treatment.
4. If a few live lice are still found 8-12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. The medicine may take longer to kill all the lice. Comb dead and any remaining live lice out of the hair using a fine-toothed nit comb.
5. If, after 8-12 hours of treatment, no dead lice are found and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with your health care provider; a different lice treatment may be necessary. If your health care provider recommends a different lice treatment, carefully follow the treatment instructions contained in the box or printed on the label.
6. Nit (head lice egg) combs, often found in lice medicine packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.

7. After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days may decrease the chance of self-reinfestation. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.
8. Retreatment is meant to kill any surviving hatched lice before they produce new eggs. For some drugs, retreatment is recommended routinely about a week after the first treatment (7-10 days, depending on the drug) and for others only if crawling lice are seen during this period.

**Think Prevention!** You can help protect your kids from head lice by teaching them to:

- Avoid head-to-head contact with other children
- Do not share combs, brushes, hair ties, hats, etc.
- not lie on bedding, pillows, and carpets that have recently been used by someone with lice
- Discard combs, brushes, and barrettes, or soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Machine-wash linens, bedding, and clothing worn at least 2 days before treatment using hot water (130°F). Place in a hot dryer cycle for 30 minutes.
- Clothing and items (like stuffed animals) that are not washable can be dry-cleaned **OR** sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2-3 weeks.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where your child sat or lay. However, the risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a rug or carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits (eggs) cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the human scalp. Spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid re-infestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.
- Do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.
- Inspect the rest of the family for the next 2 weeks. Only treat if live lice are found.

#### **RESOURCES:**

\**Lice Aren't So Nice* Kid's Health [http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill\\_injure/sick/lice.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/sick/lice.html)

\*RID <http://www.ridlice.com> 1-800-RIDLICE (Customer support)

\*The Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>

\*The Mississippi Dept. of Health  
<http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/14,14821,119,642,html>