

Section 1 -If Lice is Found: What to Know

So, you have found lice or nits in your child's hair? Don't panic! By reading this document and doing some research (see **Section 4 – Helpful Websites**), you will learn what tasks need to be completed to rid your family of this problem, and hopefully prevent further lice infestation in your home.

Many options and opinions exist on how to remove lice. We would like to point you in the right direction and let you know you are not alone. Many families have battled this problem. Things to know:

- 1) **Your child may not be at school if he/she has lice (or sleepovers, or scouting events, or play dates).** By sending your child to school knowingly with lice, you are perpetuating the cycle. How would you feel if you spent all that time and money to rid your child of lice, only to have him/her pick it right up again at school? You must report it to the MTA Health Office so that they may notify the other parents in your child's class (This is all ANONYMOUS). This way the other parents have a heads-up and know to be checking their children so they can catch it early. Chances are good that your child is not the only one in the class with lice! The Health Office keeps this information confidential, but it needs to be tracked.
- 2) **You will need to immediately buy and use a lice removal shampoo, and there are natural products that work.** This is where it gets opinionated. Many people use Rid or Nix (pesticide shampoos) with good results; others use natural products that are equally as effective. Some swear by olive oil or mayonnaise treatments – see **Section 3- Lice and Nit Removal**. Ask the Health Office for more information and product recommendations. You will need to repeat the shampoo and nit removal process on certain days (for example, Day 1, Day 3, and Day 7). *Read and follow the directions on the shampoo exactly.* This is to ensure nothing was overlooked or has survived. You may need to treat members of the family simultaneously.
- 3) **Google “Lice Treatment Phoenix” and you will get some great suggestions.** There are options when it comes to tackling the problem of lice. Some use Rid or Nix or something their doctor may prescribe, some use homeopathic remedies (olive oil, mayonnaise, etc...) and some call a lice removal service. These people are lice-removal experts who, for an hourly rate, will come to your home and check heads, then remove any lice and nits that are present. This is highly effective, but more expensive. The important thing is pick a method, and be thorough.
- 4) **The second imperative part of ridding your child of lice is manually removing the nits (lice eggs). Shampooing is only half the battle.** One louse will lay about 7-10 nits per day. If not removed the nits will hatch into live lice in about 7-12 days. Lice shampoos will kill some but not all nits, so manually removing them is necessary. The nits are clear, white or amber colored, are about the size of a pinhead and are cemented to the hair near the scalp. Nits can be hard to see so looking for them in bright sunlight is recommended. They will not wash out during shampooing. See **Section 3 - Lice and Nit Removal** for detailed information.
- 5) **Treat your home.** See **Section 2 – Treating the Home: A Checklist.**

Section 2- Treating the Home: A Checklist

Laundry (hot water and high heat dryer cycle for at least 30 minutes):

- ✓ Wash clothes the child has been wearing.
- ✓ Wash linens and towels, especially pillowcases.
- ✓ Launder everything washable that the child has been in contact with.
- ✓ BAG items that cannot go through the washing machine such as stuffed animals, throw pillows, etc. Bag tightly in trash bags and place in the garage for 14 days.
- ✓ If something is difficult to wash but can fit in the dryer, using just the dryer is still completely effective at killing lice, but the dryer cycle must be on high heat for 30 minutes or more to work. Lice cannot survive high heat or freezing temperatures.

Vacuuming:

- ✓ Vacuum all carpet.
- ✓ Vacuum all upholstered furniture. You can use a hot iron on mattress covers or furniture IF high heat will not damage the surface.
- ✓ Spraying furniture or carpet with insecticide sprays (lice sprays) is not necessary, but these sprays are available at drugstores if desired cleaning techniques are less than personally satisfactory.

Brushes, combs, hair accessories:

- ✓ Place these in the freezer. Lice will not survive freezing temperatures. The items need to be in the freezer for at least 3-4 hours or for the entire treatment cycle if preferred.
- ✓ You can also bag hair brushes, accessories, etc for at least 14 days.
- ✓ A third method of treating brushes and combs is to submerge them in *hot* (almost boiling) water for at least 15 minutes.
- ✓ Never share towels, hair brushes or combs in your household. Each person should have their own personal items.

Preventative Measures:

- ✓ Do not share jackets, hats, helmets, brushes or combs – ever!
- ✓ Parents should check heads once a week for signs of lice so it can be caught early.
- ✓ Keep hats, jackets and backpacks apart from one another.
- ✓ Keep children's heads apart as they sleep, watch TV, etc. if possible.
- ✓ Lice like clean hair more than dirty hair. Styling longer hair in ponytails and braids is a good precautionary measure.
- ✓ Some parents use lice repelling hair products found on-line or at drugstores.

Section 3- Lice and Nit Removal

Below are a few treatment options. Some treatments work better for some than others. Pick the method that works best for you; some people combine methods. Check all family members.

1. Shampoos

Use an over the counter shampoo such as Rid or Nix to kill most of the lice. Read and follow the label instructions carefully. Don't leave on longer than recommended! These packages contain nit removal combs if desired. Even with shampooing, you still need to remove all nits. To remove the nits, some use the nit comb provided with the shampoo while others use their finger nails. Dispose of nits in the trash and remove the trash from your house. Each day continue to check for nits that you may have overlooked.

2. Homeopathic Treatments

Some parents prefer to use more natural products. There are a variety of options. You can Google "natural lice treatment Phoenix" and it will direct you to products and services available locally. There are many natural treatments that parents swear by (olive oil, mayonnaise, mouthwash etc...) that kills lice by smothering them. The following are two examples:

Olive oil treatment:

Slowly saturate hair with olive oil working on one small section at a time. Make sure the hair is fully saturated because the scalp must be very oily. Put on shower cap to reduce mess.

Leave the olive oil on for 3 hours. The oil covers the lice and eggs, preventing them from breathing. After 3 hours comb hair with a regular plastic comb. If you are working with long hair section it and clip sections up. Then with a metal nit comb or your fingernails comb through hair in one inch sections removing nits as you go. Rinse comb or nails often in very hot, soapy water. Watch for lice trying to escape the oil by coming to the surface or hanging out around the hair line. After completely removing nits from all areas of the hair you can wash hair with Dawn dishwashing liquid to remove the grease. Rinse hair then wash with regular shampoo and conditioner. The next day (Day 2) repeat the oil and comb out process. Do the same treatment with nit comb out also on Days 3, 5, and 7. You may do the treatments past Day 7 or more often if you like, but do not miss any of these days or you may have to start over as they are timed to coincide with the life cycle of the louse. Look each day for any nits that you may have missed. Getting out the nits is key!

Mayonnaise treatment:

The mayonnaise treatment is similar: Saturate the hair with full-fat mayonnaise and then cover with a shower cap or saran wrap and let it sit for about 2-3 hours. Then wash their hair and comb it following the directions above for nit removal and comb out. This treatment, like the olive oil, is supposed to smother and kill the lice and some of the nits. As with ALL lice treatments, it is critical to manually remove every single nit - you cannot tell a dead nit from a live one. Look each day for any nits that you may have missed. Getting out the nits is key! Again, you will want to repeat this treatment to coincide with the life cycle of the louse.

Section 4 - Helpful Websites

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

www.totallicecontrol.com/

http://pediatrics.about.com/cs/conditions/a/head_lice.htm

<http://www.licemd.com/lice/>

<http://www.headlice.org/faq/questions.htm>

<http://headlicecenter.com/>