

# LICE 101

## Everything you really didn't want to know about lice!

<b>Definitions</b>	
Lice- more than one louse	Nit-eggs, dead or alive of a louse
Louse-small insect that lives on the scalp	Parasite-lives off another, in this case the blood of humans
Pediculosis-having an infestation of lice	Infestation-having an insect present, in this case, in your head
<b>Myths</b>	<b>Truths</b>
Lice are easy to get	Lice are spread only by head to head contact. They are much harder to get than a cold, flu, ear infection, pink eye, strep throat, food poisoning or impetigo.
You can get lice from your dog, guinea pig or other animal	Lice are species specific. You can only get human lice from another human. You cannot get another animal's lice
Lice are often passed via hats and helmet	Rarely, but possible. Hairbrushes, pillows and sheets are much more common modes of transmission
School is a common place for lice transmission	School is a VERY RARE source of transmission. Much more common are family members, overnight guests and playmates who spent a large amount of time together
Poor hygiene contributes to lice	Hygiene makes absolutely no difference. Lice actually like clean hair more than dirty. You get lice by close personal contact with someone else who has lice, not by being dirty
Lice can jump or fly from one person to another	Lice can only crawl. They can neither fly nor jump. They must crawl from one person to another
Any nits left in the hair can cause lice to come back	Any nits farther away than $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ on the hair shaft are <b>ALREADY HATCHED</b> and pose no risk to others
Eggs or nits can fall out of the hair, hatch and cause lice in another person	Nits are cemented to the hair and very hard to remove. They cannot fall off. Newly hatched larvae must find a head quickly or will die.
Lice can live a long time	Lice live only 1-2 days off the head
All members of a family should be treated if one person has lice	Only the person with lice should be treated. Lice shampoos are <b>INSECTICIDES</b> and can be dangerous if used incorrectly or too frequently. Household members and close contacts should be checked, but only treat those who actually have lice. The house should <b>NOT</b> be sprayed with insecticide, nor used on clothing or other items.
Checking a classroom when one student has lice can prevent lice from spreading	Classroom transmission is <b>EXCEEDINGLY RARE</b> and a waste of valuable teaching time. Checking family members and close playmates is much more appropriate
Avoiding lice is important as they spread disease	Lice do not spread any known disease. They are annoying and icky, but cause no disease.

## Treatment of Individual

Chemical treatment with the use of a medicated shampoo is an option. Manual removal is necessary with any option that a family chooses.

### Chemical Treatment

- \* Apply as directed. Follow directions on package insert carefully.
- \* Do not apply in bathtub or shower. Apply over sink to minimize the exposure of the chemical to the rest of the body. Avoid contact with the eyes.
- \* Do not use the products on babies or pregnant women.
- \* Do not treat individuals who do not have evidence of head lice.

### Manual Removal

- \* Sit in comfortable chair with a good source of light.
- \* Thoroughly clean and comb out hair removing all tangles and debris.
- \* Work on one section of the hair at a time.
- \* Comb each section away from scalp using a fine tooth comb.
- \* Clean off the comb after each stroke to remove any caught lice or eggs.
- \* Repeat this technique throughout the head carefully inspecting the hair.
- \* Remove nits with fingernails or safety scissors if nits remain after several attempts with the comb.

## Treatment of Personal Articles and Clothing

Heat is lethal to lice and their eggs, therefore, many personal articles can be disinfected by machine washing in HOT water and /or machine drying, using the hot cycle of the dryer. Non-washable items may be disinfected in the dryer, provided that heat will not harm them. If total reliance is placed on the clothes dryer for disinfection, dry articles for at least 20 minutes at the high heat setting.

1. Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with the infested individual within the previous three days.
2. Non-washable items can be vacuumed, dry-cleaned or placed in a plastic bag sealed for 14 days.
3. Comb, brushes, similar items can be disinfected by soaking them in one of the pediculicide shampoos for one hour or by soaking them in a pan of water heated on the stove to about 150 degrees for 5 to 10 minutes (caution: heat may damage some combs and brushes.)
4. Because lice can live only a short time if they fall off the head, environmental clean up is limited to simple vacuuming of carpets, upholstered furniture, etc. Use of insecticides or fumigants on upholstered furniture, carpets, bedding, etc. is not recommended.
5. Continue checking for 35 days, the life span of the louse.

For more information about head lice and tips for successful treatment please refer to the following:

**Harvard School of Public Health [www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html)**

**National Pediculosis Association at [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org)**

Video Supplement  
**Head Lice to Dead Lice**

A New Treatment Program to Address Persistent Head Lice Infestations

**FIVE-STEP BATTLE PLAN**

**★ STEP 1: Use a pediculicide**

Use an over the counter pediculicidal shampoo or creme rinse to kill most of the lice. Read the labels carefully and discuss the product with your doctor or pharmacist. The National Pediculosis Association discourages the use of Lindane (Kwell), a prescription product which can cause serious side effects.

**★ STEP 2: The olive oil treatment**

Olive oil smothers and kills active head lice (*lab tested at the Harvard School of Public Health*). Apply as demonstrated in the video using the following calendar:

Olive Oil Treatment Days: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, & 21

The treatments have been carefully timed to coincide with the life cycle of the louse. If you choose not to use a pediculicide, use the olive oil treatment on Day 1 and Day 2 in addition to all other designated days (see below).

You may do the treatments more often if you like, but do not miss any of these days or, chances are, you will have to start over.

**★ STEP 3: Clean the environment**

The housecleaning steps demonstrated in this video will help avoid re-infestation, so clean once, then concentrate on heads.

**★ STEP 4: Comb out the nits**

Leave the olive oil in the hair for the comb out. Using a good metal nit comb, comb the hair section by section (see video). Then comb carefully over the entire scalp. Wash out the oil as demonstrated in the video.

**Note:** The olive oil kills by covering the holes through which the lice breathe. If lice aren't completely covered by oil, they may not die. But the oil will slow them down, allowing them to be caught in the nit comb. If the pediculicide fails to kill a bug, it means that bug is resistant and will never be killed by that chemical, no matter how many times you use it. This is not true of olive oil. Each time you use the olive oil, it has a good chance of killing each bug.

**★ STEP 5: Check for nits**

Check dry hair in bright light for any nits you have missed (see video).

**★★ When is it safe to send my child back to school? ★★**

When you have completed one pediculicide treatment, one olive oil treatment, a thorough nit combing and nit check as demonstrated in the video, (or two olive oil treatments and no pediculicide) and cleaned your environment, it should be safe to send your child back to school. As long as you continue to treat (and check for nits) over the next three weeks on the days designated above, your child should not infest anyone else.

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**Head Lice to Dead Lice**

*Safe Solutions for Frantic Families*

A New Treatment Program to Address Persistent Head Lice Infestations

Anyone can get head lice. In fact, these parasites infest over 10 million Americans a year. And while they are annoying and upsetting...

**★ Head lice are not life threatening!**

The most commonly prescribed treatments for head lice are pediculicidal shampoos and creme rinses. These products contain insecticides and must be used with caution. See your pharmacist or doctor for more information.

However, if you have used a pediculicidal product, have followed the directions exactly and still find live lice... *you are not alone.*

**★ Alert! Reports of pediculicide resistant lice on the rise!**

Recent media reports warn that head lice appear to have developed resistance to pediculicidal products. This is not surprising, as most bugs become resistant to insecticides over time. Therefore, relying on pediculicides alone may fail to eliminate head lice.

**★ Don't panic!**

Recent experiments by entomologists at the Harvard School of Public Health confirm that olive oil smothers and kills active head lice. People also find that the olive oil makes nit removal easier and moisturizes the scalp after the pediculicide. Combined with diligent nit combing and checking throughout a three week period (the life cycle of the louse), olive oil offers a safe, supplemental tool in the elimination of head lice. And, unlike pediculicides, olive oil can be used repeatedly without compromising your child's health.

**★ Head lice to Dead Lice**

The five-step battle plan outlined in this video will help schools and families eliminate head lice with a minimum of trauma and without overexposing anyone to toxins.

**★ Be persistent. Get rid of head lice!**

To order the **Head Lice to Dead Lice** video, contact:

SAWYER MAC PRODUCTIONS

E-mail: sawyermac@aol.com

Website: www.headliceinfo.com

To Reorder Call: 1-781-647-5338



## Dealing with lice

Buy the largest bottle of white vinegar that you can find. You will use it all.

Using a large wide bowl, pour about 2" of vinegar into the bottom. Dip head into vinegar. Using a cup, collect vinegar and continue to pour over the head soaking all of the hair. Lice will fall out dead during this process.

When head is sufficiently soaked, do not rinse vinegar out. Using a fine toothed comb, comb hair. This will release the nits.

Towel dry hair. Sit in good light and look for nits and pull them out of hair. If they are stuck, squirt the nit with vinegar and then you will be able to slide it out easily. Dip fingers into a bowl of vinegar to get the nit off of your finger. Then wipe your hand with a towel and look for some more.

At night, repeat step 3 & 4. Then cover your hair and scalp with hair conditioner.

Cover head with a plastic bag tie it on tight so that it will not fall off during the night. This suffocates the lice.

In the morning wash hair; look for nits under good lighting. If you find nits then repeat process until no nits are found.

Soak combs and brushes in vinegar after each use until nits are gone.