

TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE

The following is a suggested procedure you may wish to confirm with your physician or local health department prior to use.

A. ***Treatment of the Child***

1. Remove all your child's clothing and place him/her in a bath or shower stall and the clothing in a plastic bag.
2. Apply head louse treatment according to your physician's instructions or label instructions provided by the drug manufacturer. There are medicated liquids (pediculicides) available for head lice available by prescription only. There is no published evidence to indicate that one product is superior to the others. Parents need to consult their physician regarding such products. Many of these shampoos are insecticides and should be used with caution, especially on children and by pregnant or nursing women. If your child has allergies or asthma, please consult with his/her physician. If the package directions indicate, apply a second treatment ten (10) days later to kill lice that hatch after the initial treatment. Do not over apply.

Malathion (Ovide) should be used with extreme caution and Lindane is not recommended.

Never use any volatile, synthetic pyrethroid or lindane or malathion shampoos on your child.

3. Do not apply any household insecticide or other chemicals not specifically labeled for treating head lice on people. Toxic or flammable substances, particularly when used with hair dryers, may cause injuries or death. Because it is easy to burn the hair and the scalp, this method should not be used.
4. Have your child put on clean clothing after treatment.
5. All family members and close friends of your child should be examined. Family members who have evidence of infestation (crawling forms or nits) should be treated. Anyone who shares a bed with a known infested child should be treated, whether or not there is evidence of infestation at the time of the examination.

B. Decontamination of Personal Articles and Environment

Since heat is lethal to lice and their eggs, many personal articles can be disinfested by machine washing in hot water and/or drying using the hot cycle of the dryer. Eggs are killed in five (5) minutes at 51.5°C (125°F), and crawling forms succumb to slightly lower temperatures. Home hot water heaters keep water at about 60°C/140°F when the heat selector is set on medium or high. However, some water heaters are not able to sustain the 60°C/140°F water temperature when several loads of laundry are processed one after the other or when other demands for hot water (bathing) are made simultaneously. To maintain the water at 60°C/140°F or higher, allow time between loads of laundry or baths for the water heater to regain its maximum water temperature. If total reliance is placed in the clothes dryer for disinfestation, dry articles for at least twenty (20) minutes at the high heat setting. Some nonwashable articles may be disinfested in the dryer provided that the heat will not harm them.

1. Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with your child within the previous three (3) days.
2. Personal articles of clothing or bedding that can not be washed or dried may be dry cleaned or simply left in a plastic bag and sealed for a period of ten (10) days.
3. Combs, brushes, and similar items can be disinfested by soaking them in one of the pediculicide liquids for one (1) hour or by soaking them in a pan of water heated on the stove to about 150°F for five (5) - ten (10) minutes (caution: heat may damage some combs and brushes).
4. Using household insecticides to treat the home, vehicles, carpets or furniture will unnecessarily expose your household to harmful chemicals. Consult with your doctor or the public health department for recommended treatments to disinfect these areas.

C. Notification of Other Parents

Parents of your child's closest friend(s) should be notified that their child may also be infested since the children play together. This is particularly important if the children have slept together or participated in activities involving frequent body contact such as wrestling, ballet classes, football, etc.

D. Returning to School

Your child may return to school the morning after s/he has been treated with a head louse shampoo.

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