

5 Step Lice Treatment

If your child has lice, check the heads of all family members and treat all family members that show signs of infestation. Children under 2 months of age OR females who are pregnant or possibly pregnant or breastfeeding should always consult with their doctor's office prior to any treatment or use of medication. Pregnant women may use gloves to treat a child's hair. Head lice only live on human beings and can be spread very quickly by using hats, combs or brushes, ear phones, backpacks of an infected person or simply by close contact. Anyone can get lice despite frequent hair washing. Lice can live for only 2 - 10 days without a human host. Treatment plan and prevention of re-infestation is as follows:

- ✓ **Treat with ANTI-LICE shampoo:** For children more than 2 months old, an anti-lice shampoo should be used as directed. NIX is proven to be the best anti-lice shampoo available over the counter. Other shampoo products available are Rid, R+C Shampoo, XXX, A-200. It is recommended to retreat hair in 7 - 10 days with anti-lice shampoo.

- ✓ **REMOVE NITS:** After shampoo, dry hair and begin to remove nits. Nits (lice eggs) are tiny, oval, whitish, semi-clear eggs that firmly attach to the hair by a glue like substance. Nits are most often found on hair shafts behind the ears, nape of neck and close to the scalp. Nits are easier to see than the live lice. ALL NITS must be removed from the hair, otherwise they will hatch and cause a re-infestation. Use of natural sunlight and/ or a magnifying glass may be helpful.

Nits are easiest removed after using a rinse on the hair to loosen them. Vinegar or Lime Juice has been effective in the loosening of the nit glue. Apply Vinegar or Lime Juice on the hair and leave on for one (1) hour. After one hour, rinse completely. Comb nits out with a fine tooth metal nit comb available at your pharmacy. The CLEAR egg and lice removal product has also been found effective in the loosening of the nit glue. If unable to remove nits with the nit comb, use your finger and thumb to grab nit and pull down the hair shaft. Discard nits in a sealed plastic bag.

- ✓ CLEAN ENVIRONMENT: Nits can survive without a human for up to 10 days. Vacuum all carpets, car upholstery, stuffed animals, and mattresses frequently. Don't forget infant/child car seats. Wash all sheets, blankets, pillows, pillow cases, and towels in HOT water and dry in a HOT dryer for at least 20 minutes each time the child is treated with shampoo or olive oil. It is recommended to change sheets daily. Any items that are not washable should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and put away for at least 3 weeks. Vacuuming should be done often (and throw the collection bag away). Backpacks should be washed daily. Beanie babies, etc. can be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. All combs, brushes, barrettes, etc. should be soaked in a bleach solution. (1 Tablespoon bleach to 8 oz. hot water) for at least 1 hour. Replace rubber bands and other hair ties, unless they can be washed as described above.
- ✓ OLIVE OIL TREATMENT: A recent study has proven that some lice are resistant to the anti-lice shampoo but olive oil is successful in the suffocation of live lice. Olive Oil treatments are recommended to prevent the re-infestation of lice by interrupting the life cycle of the louse.

After the removal of nits, DRY HAIR COMPLETELY with a hair dryer. Apply olive oil to scalp and hair. Saturate scalp and hair completely with the olive oil. Olive oil will suffocate the lice if left on the hair for at least 4 hours. After olive oil is placed on head, cover the head with a plastic shower cap. You can secure shower cap with a bandana tied around outside of shower cap.

(Caution: use plastic shower cap with caution for children less than 5 years of age due to risk of suffocation.)

OLIVE OIL TREATMENT MUST BE REPEATED EVERY 4 DAYS FOR THREE WEEKS. This is to interrupt the life cycle of the louse.

After 4 hours, wash olive oil out of hair with a shampoo for oily hair.

- ✓ REMOVE NITS: After removal of olive oil, look for nits. Repeat nit removal until all nits are removed from hair.