

Village Pediatrics of Chapel Hill



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At Takes a Village ..

Lice Treatment and Prevention

Head lice and their white eggs, called nits, live in the hair and bite the scalp causing a rash and itching. Nits can be found at the base of the scalp attached to the hair shaft. The nits normally hatch into lice in about 1 week. They spread quickly by using the hats, combs, sunglasses, or brushes of an infected person, or simply by close contact. Lice may crawl or fall onto clothing, bedding, towels, stuffed toys, or furniture. Anyone can get lice despite good health habits and frequent hair washing. Head lice live only on human beings.

Anti-lice shampoo or rinse: Some great OTC products are Rid or Nix located in the pharmacy section of the grocery store. You can also try Fairy Tales Lice Good-Bye non-toxic foam shampoo located at Ulta. Follow the directions on the package and repeat the anti-lice shampoo once after 9-10 days to prevent reinfection.

Removing nits: Only live lice can cause lice in other children. Nits do not transmit lice. Most treated nits are dead after the first treatment. The others will be killed with the second treatment in 9-10 days. Nits can be removed by backcombing with a special nit comb or pulling them out individually. Wetting the hair with water makes removal easier, but avoid any products that claim they loosen the nits. (Reason: They can interfere with the ability of the anti-lice medicine to stay on the hair and keep working.) Nit combs can also be found in the pharmacy section at the grocery store. Another great nit comb product is called Fairy Tales "Terminator" comb located at Ulta.

Cleaning the house: Head lice can't live for more than 24 hours off the human body, while nits can live for up to 2 weeks. Vacuum; soak combs and brushes for 1 hour in a solution made from the anti-lice shampoo; and wash sheets, blankets, and pillowcases in hot water. Items that can't be washed (stuffed toys, hats, or coats) can be sealed in plastic bags for 2 weeks (until the nits are dead). For prevention, you can also spray your house w/ rosemary spray or use ½ mint Listerine mouthwash and ½ water to make your own mint spray. For further cleaning/prevention tips or help, please contact Brittany at Lice Happens via phone (919-609-2046) or via email (Info@licehappens.com). For further information regarding this company, please visit their website at www.licehappens.com.

Contagiousness: Check the scalp of all family members. If lice or nits are seen, or the scalp becomes itchy, treat with anti-lice shampoo. Bedmates of children with lice should also be treated. Your child can return to school after the first treatment with the shampoo and nit removal. Remind your child not to share combs and hats.

Call during office hours if:

- The rash and itching are not gone 1 week after treatment.
- The sores start to spread or look infected or the lice and nits return.

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