

7 STEPS TO HEAD LICE CONTROL

Head lice continue to be a problem in our community. If your child comes home with head lice, don't panic. Playing with others, a simple exchange of hats, clothing, combs and other personal items can lead to the transmission of lice from one person to another. Head lice are highly contagious and may be difficult to control. However, you can have your children free of lice by using the following steps to eliminate an infestation and prevent reoccurrence.

- 1. Inspect- Examine heads:** Lice are small insects, about the size of a sesame seed and white or light brown in color. Carefully examine and scalp of **all** family members for lice and their eggs (called nits).
- 2. Treat** you should contact your physician and let the doctor decide what the best treatment is for all members of your family. Treatments include over the counter products, prescription products, and nit combs. A nit comb is a plastic comb. Use it by slowly combing through all hair to remove nits. All nits must be removed. Nits not removed may turn into crawling lice in 7-10 days. Let the physician decide what the best and appropriate treatment is.
- 3. Clean up environment-** the use of lice control spray is not necessary.

Wash: Launder washable clothing and other items used recently by the infested persons in hot water. Wash bed linens, pillow cases, blankets, scarves, towels, etc. Soak all brushes and combs in hot water for 10 minutes. Dry clean clothing that cannot be machine washed or hang it in a storage bag for 14 days.

Vacuum: Thoroughly vacuum rugs, upholstered furniture, mattresses, pillows stuffed toys and other items used recently by the infested persons. Items may be sealed in a plastic bag for 14 days to ensure that no lice survive.

4. Re-inspect/Treat as needed in 7-10 days

No lice control product will kill 100% of nits (despite label claims). Re-inspect for lice and nits on the 10th day after treatment. If lice are found contact your physician. Re-treat if your physician instructs you to do so. This second application will control newly hatched lice, thus eliminating reoccurrence. Use a nit comb as in the first treatment.

5. Signs of a successful treatment

No lice will be seen and no new nits will be laid. When first laid, nits are attached to hair near the scalp. As the hair grows, they are moved away from the scalp. By 10 days after a successful treatment, no nits will be closer than ¼ inch from the scalp.

6. If treatment fails

Be sure to follow directions on label closely. If lice reappear within 10 days after treatment, perhaps not all nits were removed. Contact you physician. Re-treat with lice control product at the physician's advice.

7. Ways to prevent the spread of head lice

Do NOT use personal items belonging to others, combs, brushes, hats, clothing, etc.