

HEAD LICE

Topical therapies

We recommend starting with the OVER-THE-COUNTER choices of Permethrins / Pyrethrins (Nix, RID, Clear, Pronto, A-200, HairClear 1,2,3) first. These have been used for a long time, so they have a long record of safety. They are not too expensive, and still work, although we are seeing more and more resistance.

CAREFULLY FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FOR PEDICULICIDES TO WORK. Choose a well-ventilated, well-lit room. Use towels to protect the clothing. Avoid contact with eyes.

Permethrin is applied to damp hair; thoroughly towel-dry hair before application. It is essential that all excess water be removed before application to prevent dilution of the pediculicide. **Pyrethrins** should be applied to DRY hair.

For these medications to work, the whole scalp and roots must be saturated, especially the hair closest to the scalp. If the hair is very long, concentrate on the hair above where a rubber band would be placed for a ponytail (i.e., on the hair closer to the scalp). Use an adequate amount. If the hair is very thick and curly, you will require more than one bottle. Start timing the treatment after everything has been applied. Leave it on for an adequate period of time: 10 – 15 minutes for Permethrin and Pyrethrins. Malathion is left on for 8 – 12 hours.

Remove as directed. For pediculicide shampoos, add just enough water to generate lather and rinse thoroughly. For other forms, follow directions carefully-if advised to shampoo afterwards, do not use a conditioning shampoo.

Check hair 8-12 hours after treatment. Comb out dead lice / debris. Re-treat in 7-10 days.

How to Comb Out Head Lice

Get a good nit comb with metal teeth. Choose a well-lit area, preferably one illuminated by natural daylight. Comb through the hair with a regular comb to remove tangles. Then use the nit comb. Start at the top of the head. Examine the teeth each time the comb is drawn through; you can wipe the comb on a white paper towel and look and look for nits. Repeat the process until you've worked your way around the entire head. Repeat **every day** for 2 weeks.

Many schools still have a "no nit" policy. Combing out nits is the only way to get them all out. It is boring and time consuming but must be done every day for 2 weeks to prevent a new infestation.

MORE INFORMATION:

www.headlice.org National Pediculosis Association (718-449-NITS)

Sells the **LiceMeister Comb** – great comb for getting out nits

www.ridlice.com

www.nixlice.com

Other options for treatment include prescription medications, which we often use after trying the above Over-the-counter medications.

SKLICE = Ivermectin (over 6 months old)

NATROBA = SPINOSAD = Benzyl Alcohol

ULESFIA = Benzyl Peroxide (over 6 months old)

OVIDE = Malathion (over 6 years old)

Other treatments with unknown effectiveness:

Cetaphil <http://nuvoforheadlice.com/>

Petroleum jelly (Vaseline) (may work but almost impossible to get out of hair)

Mayonnaise (probably does not work very well)

Tea Tree Oil (some products may reduce number of lice, but studies have found it only works a little better than combing out all the lice)

Heated comb (may work a little better than regular lice comb, but still need to comb out entire head several times)

There are also companies that will come to your home and treat each individual. They usually guarantee results, but can be expensive.

Sterilize all combs in rubbing alcohol for 10 minutes.

Wash the towels in hot water and place in the dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes to kill any lice on the towels.

Treat all bedding. All sheets, pillowcases, blankets, comforters and bedspreads should be placed in a dryer on HIGH for at least 10 min.

Any non-washable items (stuffed animals) should be placed in double plastic bags for several days. Squeeze out as much air as possible to suffocate the lice.